

The Impact of Servant Leadership on Strategic Planning in Kuwait Schools: A Field Study

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify prevalent leadership styles of Kuwaiti school principals, the current status of servant leadership, and servant-leadership behaviors affecting strategic planning in Kuwaiti schools. Interviews comprised the primary tool for identifying the viewpoints of a study sample of 10 teachers and 10 department heads in six education districts in Kuwait. Successful school leader characteristics defined included visionary, honest, self-confident, and valuing diversity; possession of delegation skills and ability to listen to and respect opinions of others. Prevalent leadership styles identified in Kuwaiti school principals were authoritative, transformational, and servant leadership. Behaviors affecting implementation of strategic plans were foresight; stewardship; conceptualization; and awareness of changes occurring at local, national, and international levels. Recommendations include raising staff awareness of the importance of creating an atmosphere of cooperation, shared responsibility, and respect. Future studies could identify the effects of servant leadership, as opposed to other styles, can have on different dimensions of the educational setting.

Introduction

No one can deny the significance of the human element in organizational environments; it is the basic engine that works toward innovation and development. We cannot turn a blind eye to the role played by school leadership in supporting all people within the school environment to help it to achieve its short- and long-term goals.

In the light of the different changes in the school climate and the surrounding environment, the trend nowadays is to discover effective styles of leadership to make this process more efficient. (Fridell,

Belcher, and Messner, 2009) posited the need to transform traditional leadership models into more effective styles. Among the models that have been developed for the improvement of school leadership is servant leadership, which has succeeded in attracting the attention of educational policy makers over the past few decades (Jackson, 2010).

The concept of servant leadership was first introduced in 1970 by Robert Greenleaf, who stated that the real leader emerges from among those who possess a natural motivation to help others and a desire for improvement in the well-being of followers. Servant leadership is described as a practical leadership style that aims to encourage leaders to serve others and work with them collaboratively in the organizational community. Greenleaf identified 10 characteristics of servant leadership: building community, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of others, listening, empathy, persuasion, conceptualization, healing, and awareness (Black 2013; Jackson, 2010; Kasun, 2009).

Servant leadership plays an important role in enhancing positive outcomes at organizational levels; it also helps in increasing the effectiveness of teams (Mahembe & Engelbrecht, 2014). Many of today's educational institutions have tried to make full use of the servant leadership style to improve the quality of the educational process and its outcomes. This research discusses the importance of servant leadership in influencing the strategic plans of school departments.

Statement of the problem

Education is one of the most critical and widely discussed issues among academic researchers and educational policy makers in the State of Kuwait. Alhouti and Male (2015) found that education in Kuwait is facing many great challenges on the level of program quality of leadership skills. To overcome these challenges, the Ministry of Education in Kuwait has initiated many reforms to improve the leadership capacity of principals, and as a result many training programs have been implemented to improve leadership styles according to the needs of schools, the community around them, and the requirements of the current age.

Al-Safran, Brown, and Wiseman (2013) showed that Kuwaiti school principals tended to use an authoritative leadership style, with

which the principals sought to engender cooperation and collaboration among teachers. Principals in cultures depending on centralization (such as Kuwait) stress their authoritative roles over their interpersonal roles. Unfortunately, the interpersonal role is one of the critical roles that must be played by school principals to improve educational outcomes.

The educational system in Kuwait is highly centralized, and many areas are greatly affected by its central practices, among these strategic planning efficiency and the level of comprehensiveness of strategic plans (AlKandari, 2013). As a result, there is a serious need to enhance the role played by Kuwaiti school leadership to improve the effectiveness of the strategic plans in schools. We can say that the statement of the problem revolves around investigating the role that might be played by servant leaders in Kuwaiti schools in affecting the strategic plans of school departments.

Study questions

The questions addressed in this study are as follows:

- 1 - What are the most important characteristics of a successful school leader?
- 2 - From your viewpoint, which leadership style is prevalent among school principals in Kuwait?
- 3 - To what extent do school principals in Kuwait exercise servant leadership?
- 4 - What servant-leadership behaviors may affect the strategic plans of school departments in Kuwaiti schools?

Objectives of the study

This study aims at identifying the prevalent leadership styles employed by school principals in Kuwaiti schools and to shed light on the real status of servant leadership among school principals in Kuwait. In addition, the study seeks to determine the different servant leadership behaviors that may affect the strategic plans of school departments in Kuwaiti schools.

Significance of the study

The empirical data obtained from the current study can help in

enriching the scientific knowledge regarding the nature of servant leadership in Kuwait. The study will also reflect on the practical applications and theoretical discussions related to servant leadership in Kuwaiti schools. The study strives to provide policy makers with some insights that can help in developing the strategic plans of school departments.

Study limitations

The limitations identified in this study are as follows:

- **Subject limitations:** This study is limited to the different servant-leadership behaviors that may affect the strategic plans of school departments in Kuwaiti schools.
- **Time limitations:** This study is limited to the academic year 2015-2016.
- **Spatial limitations:** This study is limited to school teachers and heads of departments in Kuwaiti schools from the six education districts (the Capital, Hwalli, Alfrwania, Mubarak Alkabeir, Alahmadi, Aljahra).

Key terms

Servant: one that serves others (Merriam-Webster online)

Leader: a person who leads; a person who has commanding authority or influence (Merriam-Webster online)

Servant leadership: A philosophy and set of practices that enriches the lives of individuals, builds better organizations and servant creates a more just and caring world (Wikipedia)

Servant Leadership Style: Servant leadership is a leadership style in which the leader is considered primarily a servant to those he or she leads. It can be defined as a form of leadership where the leadership works for the benefit of the group within the organization (Bovee, 2012). Dyck and Schroeder (2005) describe servant leadership as 'having a positive effect on, or at least not harming, those stakeholders who are "the least privileged in society"' (p. 719).

Strategic plan:

A strategic plan is defined by Erbas and Erbil (2011) as "an action plan.. equipped with application steps and means within a known plan" (p. 852).

Literature review

In the 60s, a lot of research focused on the issue of leadership (Zhang, Lin & Foo, 2012). In the 1980s, the concentration was on educational reforms and restructuring of the school system (Jamal, 2014). Since then, educational specialists and academic researchers have tended to concentrate their research on isolating effective and sustainable practices that can improve the educational process and help in improving the performance of students (Williams, 2014).

Many schools around the world are facing challenges related to the decline in the number of leaders who can efficiently lead these schools (Tchong, 2014). The issue of leader effectiveness has become a central issue in organizational research; many models of leadership have concentrated on the effective characteristics and behaviors that must be present in any leader (Jamal, 2014).

Leadership does not exist in a vacuum. It can be regarded as the backbone of the organization, planning, directing, helping, and supporting all those within the organization. An organization's leaders play an important role in enhancing all human interactions within it (Alabduljader, 2012).

Servant leadership is an important leadership model that concentrates on enhancing the process of collecting information from various resources for the benefit of the whole organization, aiding the process of communication among different people within the organization, emphasizing the importance of cooperation, and supporting the process of decision making (Zamperlin, 2012).

The servant leader is characterized by a desire to serve people, provide opportunities for others to grow and learn, reduce the rates of human suffering, resonate with individuals' needs and expectations, and support the success of others (Zhang et al., 2012). Servant leadership requires leaders who can achieve discipline and have the ability to transfer theoretical background to the practical field to fulfill the daily needs of those around them (Jackson, 2010).

Spears (2000) isolated 10 characteristics of servant leadership:

- 1 - Listening:** The organizational leader always listens, observes, and asks questions to gain enough information about a given topic. Listening also implies the ability of a leader to get in touch with another's mind, spirit, and body.

- 2 - **Empathy:** Empathy refers to making a connection to students, parents, staff, and other stakeholders to understand and share their feelings.
- 3 - **Healing:** A leader should pay attention to employees and provide support and care to encourage them to give their best performance (Kasun, 2009; Lian & Kiang, 2008; Nsiah, 2009).
- 4 - **Awareness:** Awareness can be divided into two parts: self-awareness and general awareness. Servant leaders must have awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses and strengthen or modify them appropriately. They must be aware of and acknowledge the value of teamwork.
- 5 - **Persuasion:** The servant leader engenders conviction in others rather than resorting to compulsion.
- 6 - **Conceptualization.** The servant leader must seek to understand global issues to formulate procedures that will achieve desired goals and objectives. He or she must also have the ability to differentiate between vision and reality.
- 7 - **Foresight:** The leader should seek to develop an ability to foresee the consequences of actions taken. Foresight also includes the ability of the leader to predict the different outcomes of a situation (Crabtree, 2014; English, 2011; Kasun, 2009)..
- 8 - **Stewardship.** Stewardship includes sharing of power and responsibilities.
- 9 - **Commitment to growth of others:** The servant leader fosters a climate that offers real opportunities for personal and professional growth.
- 10- **Building community:** The leader mobilizes collective efforts and creates a team of people committed to working with each other to achieve common goals and objectives (Kasun, 2009).

In a study by (Salameh, 2011) to identify the prevailing servant-leadership characteristics of school principals, three highly followed practices of servant leadership were isolated: building community, displaying authenticity, and sharing leadership, while valuing others, developing people, and providing leaders were found at moderate levels.

Several studies have highlighted the positive effects of servant leadership on school systems. Black (2013) found a significant positive correlation between servant leadership and the school climate. Nsiah (2009) identified significant qualities of servant leaders such as altruism; patience with, compassion for, empowerment of, and respect for followers; interest in, support of, and service to subordinates and community; living by example; fostering of healthy relationships; a collaborative approach to leadership; and flexibility.

Crabtree (2014) demonstrated a significant positive correlation between servant leadership practiced by principals and reading achievement scores among students. Cerit (2010) discovered a significant positive relationship between servant leadership of principals and teachers' level of commitment. Consistent with these studies, (Alimi and Kayode, 2012) revealed a positive correlation between servant leadership of secondary school leaders and students' academic performance and discipline. Dixon (2013) found a positive relationship between servant leadership and professional teacher behavior.

Williams (2009) documented positive relationships between servant leadership and staff growth, empowerment, communication, enthusiasm, and confidence. Servant leadership was found to be responsible for creating a managerial change within the school system (Ibrahim & Don, 2014). English (2011) showed a positive correlation between principals' servant leadership and teachers' job satisfaction, especially in the context of such factors as wisdom, altruism, emotional healing, organizational stewardship, and persuasive mapping. Mondol (2011) found that the degree of servant leadership and workplace spirituality practiced by principals was a predictor of teacher motivation and job satisfaction.

There are a number of factors that potentially hinder implementation of servant leadership. Williams (2009) identified such challenges to implementation of servant leadership among school principals as issues related to trust, power relations, lack of emphasis on collective growth and their effects on the school system, communication problems between principals and teachers, and paternalism.

Included among the many responsibilities of school leadership is supervision of the implementation of strategic plans for different departments. Chemwei, Leboo, and Koech (2014) found many factors

affecting implementation of strategic plans in schools, among them organizational structure and leadership styles. (Njeru, Stephen, and Wambui, 2013) isolated employee motivation, availability of funds, support by top school leadership, government policy, and employee skills as factors that affect the formulation of strategic plans in schools. Effective leaders must work hard for the realization of strategic plans, raise the awareness of all people within schools regarding their importance, determine their objectives and the role of every individual in their implementation, and provide different sources of support for their success (Kamau, 2012).

The relationship between servant leadership and strategic planning

Leaders in any organization must be actively involved in the initial steps toward developing the vision of the future of the organization, and allowing that vision to be crafted by the individuals who make it up (Sullivan, 2006). Without a “vision” (i.e., planning toward a future), there is no forward goal. As many people as possible must be involved.

Servant leaders know that people are more committed to decisions when they have been involved in the decision process, even if their opinions and ideas are not accepted along the path to a final decision. That the leader listened to them and considered their input is vital to their commitment to implementation (Sullivan, 2006).

Leaders are also designers, teachers, and stewards, with the ability to build a shared vision, challenge prevailing mental modes, and foster systematic patterns of thinking (Hickman). They are responsible for building organizations where people continually expand their capabilities to shape their future - to learn. More studies are necessary to ascertain the relationship between servant leadership and the forward direction of schools, faculty, and future course development.

Previous studies

Fridell et al. (2009) sought to apply discriminate analysis to determine gender differences in leadership styles of public school principals. The study sample consisted of 445 public-school principals (265 men and 180 women) from three states in the midwestern United States. The study used descriptive analysis methodology and depended on 40-item e-mailed surveys designed to identify gender-oriented leader-

ship styles. The study found that a number of servant-leadership items were preferred by men over women and vice versa, and that all the principals reported that they were reluctant to use traditional leadership styles. The study recommended cultural- and gender-based leadership research studies among other populations.

Nsiah (2009) explored the manifestations of servant-leadership among selected Catholic high school principals. The study sample included four male and two female Catholic high school principals in Saskatchewan, Canada. The study used descriptive analysis methodology, and depended on several interviews and extended field observation as tools for the study. The study isolated a number of significant and inspiring servant-leadership qualities as well as identifying the benefits of servant leadership for followers and the community. The study recommended that future research utilize focus groups to address the perceptions of staff members, parents, and students in order to generate in-depth data for analysis.

Farris (2010) explored the relationship between servant leadership and job satisfaction in a study sample of 610 administrators and faculty at five regional U.S. universities in Alabama. The study used descriptive analysis methodology and made use of the 42-item Servant Leadership Assessment Instrument (Dennis, 2004), which is designed to identify an organization's servant-leader characteristics as perceived by employees, and the 8-item Mohrman-Cooke-Mohrman Job Satisfaction Scale (Mohrman, Cooke, Mohrman, Duncan & Zaltman, 1977), which yields separate intrinsic and extrinsic measures of job satisfaction. The study recorded the highest correlations between servant leadership and job satisfaction in those employees who were older, more educated, had worked longer, and held positions of greater responsibility within the organization. The study recommended further research to determine if servant leadership could be practiced at multiple levels within an organization, replicate the research in other locations, use different survey instruments, substitute organizational commitment for job satisfaction, and explore the larger difference in correlation coefficients based on gender.

English (2011) explored the correlation between teachers' perceptions of the level of servant-leadership practices of their principals and job satisfaction in Southern California elementary schools. The study sample

included 341 elementary teachers from three U.S. school districts. The study used descriptive analysis methodology and depended on a 96-item survey questionnaire as its study tool. The study found that teachers had a higher level of job satisfaction when their principals employed high levels of servant-leadership qualities in relation to wisdom, organizational stewardship, altruism, emotional healing, and persuasive mapping; English concluded that teachers with higher levels of job satisfaction were more likely to contribute to an environment of growth and change. The study recommended that leadership and teacher training programs focus on servant leadership, leadership and followership, relationship building, persuasion to better the organization, trust and climate building, and defining the nature of great schools.

Jacobs (2011) attempted to relate the level of perceived servant leadership to teaching effectiveness and examined the effect of teaching experience, age, and gender on the level of perceived servant leadership. The study sample consisted of 68 teachers in four university educational centers in Texas, United States. The study used descriptive analysis methodology and depended on the 60-item Teacher Leadership Assessment, Spearman rank correlation coefficients, Kruskal Wallis, and Mann-Whitney tests as study tools. The study found no statistically significant correlation between level of servant leadership and years of teaching experience, gender, or age of the instructor. Recommendations for future research included conducting a study within different educational settings, such as public and private universities, to provide additional information on how servant leadership affects teaching in varied environments.

Boyum (2012) focused on the identification and interaction of constructs of servant leadership as experienced between leader and follower. The study sample consisted of 8 self-identified servant leaders and 14 of their followers in Minnesota, United States. The study used descriptive analysis methodology, depending on semi-structured interviews and focus groups as study tools. Boyum reached a number of conclusions: (a) servant leadership is relationally based; (b) servant leadership involves an individualized focus on the follower; (c) servant leadership attends to the whole person; (d) the notable constructs identified in both leader and follower develop in stages; (e) the relational interaction of servant leader and follower result in a just climate; (f) a

common philosophical framework informs the use of servant leadership. The study recommended future comparative research in organizational settings possessing a similar nature to higher education.

Caffey (2012) investigated the impact of servant-leadership characteristics on new-teacher retention. The study sample included 123 certified teachers at various grade levels and areas of certification in Missouri, in the United States. The study used descriptive analysis methodology, and used the 10-item Servant Leadership Assessment created by Dennis (2004) to measure the teachers' attitudes toward servant-leadership characteristics and the 10-item Servant Leadership Relational Assessment to measure the relational values of servant leadership characteristics of leaders to teacher job satisfaction and intent to stay. The study found a positive perception by beginning teachers of their principals' servant leadership characteristics and a statistically significant positive relationship between servant leadership and beginning teacher job satisfaction, as well as a statistically significant positive relationship between servant leadership and beginning teacher intent to stay. The study recommended additional research in the same general area after improvements had been made to the economy, when more beginning teachers were employed, and state finances had stabilized.

Elliott (2012) explored the existence and impact of servant-leadership principles in community-college instructional administration. The study sample consisted of three North Carolina, United States, community college chief academic officers prescreened as being practitioners of servant-leadership style. The study used descriptive analysis methodology and depended on semi-structured, one-to-one interviews, observation, and document analysis as study tools. The study concluded that all three administrators displayed all 10 characteristics of a servant leader. Additional characteristics included honesty, courage, commitment to family, dedication, flexibility, and informality. One criticism of the style was the amount of time consumed by the collaborative effort demanded by servant leadership. The study recommended further studies to explore the commonalities of servant leadership to other leadership styles that place high value on shared, team-oriented leadership.

Jamerson (2014) examined servant leadership in literacy coaches from the perspective of literacy coaches, administrators, and teachers. The study sample comprised three classroom teachers, three literacy

coaches, and three administrators in an Arizona, United States, elementary school district. The study used descriptive analysis methodology and depended on structured interviews, observations, and document review as tools for the study. The study concluded that literacy coaches were inspired to become instructional leaders out of a desire to serve others, and that in addition to employing a servant-leadership style in their coaching, their leadership philosophy and style was influenced by servant leaders. The study recommended additional research related to servant leadership and literacy coaching to advance the understanding of servant leadership and literacy coaching and address the research gaps that exist in both areas.

Furrow (2015) looked for statistically significant differences in the mean servant-leadership scores of Christian school teachers who served with servant-leader principals and those who served with non-servant-leader principals. The sample in this study included principals and teachers of U.S. K-12 Christian schools. The study used descriptive analysis methodology and depended on the 68-item Leadership in Christian Schools Survey to measure leadership characteristics in both school administrators and teachers in the schools studied. The study concluded that teacher training was needed for the implementation of servant leadership in the Christian school classroom. One of the factors influencing Christian school teachers' exercise of the principles of servant leadership in the classroom could be understanding or knowledge of these principles. Individual factors of servant leadership were not statistically significant predictors for determining if a teacher worked for a servant-leader or non-servant-leader principal. The researcher recommended further study on the relationship between teacher retention and servant leadership in Christian schools.

Comparison of previous and current study

The objective of the current study is partially consistent with Elliott (2012), who explored the servant leadership in community-college instructional administration; Boyum (2012), who investigated servant leadership with particular focus on its constructs and interactions as experienced between leader and follower; and Nsiah (2009) who explored the prevalence of servant leadership in high-school principals. The current study is not consistent in its objectives with Fridell et al.

(2009), who analyzed gender differences in principals' leadership styles; Jamerson (2014), who saw servant leadership as exemplified in the work of literacy coaches from the perspective of literacy coaches, administration, and teachers; Caffey (2012), who investigated servant-leadership characteristics and their impact on new teacher retention; or Jacobs (2011), who investigated the relationship between the perceived level of servant leadership and effective teaching.

The sample used in this study is not consistent with any of the previous studies reviewed, as the current sample consists of heads of departments and school teachers, whereas Furrow (2015) and Jamerson (2014) studied school administrators and teachers, Caffey (2012) and English (2011) focused on teachers, Elliott (2012) studied chief academic officers, (Boyum, 2012) selected servant leaders and their followers, Jacobs (2011) studied university instructors, Farris (2010) studied university employees, and Nsiah (2009) and Fridell et al. (2009) sampled school principals.

The methodology of the study is not consistent with the methodology employed in the previous studies as the current study depended on quantitative and qualitative methodology, whereas Fridell et al. (2009), Farris (2010), English (2011), Elliott (2012), Caffey (2012), Jamerson (2014), and Nsiah (2009) used descriptive analysis methodology.

The study instrument is not consistent with Furrow (2015) and Fridell et al. (2009), who used surveys; Jamerson (2014), who used structured interviews, observations, and document review; Caffey (2012) and (Farris, 2010), who used the Servant Leadership Assessment; Elliott (2012), who used semi-structured, one-on-one interviews, observation, and document analysis; Boyum (2012), who used semi-structured interviews and focus groups; Jacobs (2011), who used the Teacher Leadership Assessment; English (2011), who used questionnaires; or Nsiah (2009), who used interviews and extended field observation.

The researcher has benefited from previous studies in more than one area:

- Reviewing the literature and documenting the references used in the study.
- Supporting the literature with results of researches and studies regarding the topic.

- Building the statement of the problem through reviewing relevant studies.
- Determining the methodology and the study instruments to be used.
- Identifying appropriate statistical methods to employ.
- Identifying the method to use in developing the results of the study through analyzing the data of the current study and identifying areas of similarity and difference.

Methodology and study sample

The study employs both quantitative and qualitative methodology by using interviews as the main study tool to identify the viewpoints of the study sample regarding the different servant-leadership behaviors that affect departmental strategic plans. The study sample consists of 10 teachers and 10 heads of academic departments chosen from the six education districts in the state of Kuwait. The researcher employed structured, one-on-one interviews with the study sample, each interview ranging between 12 and 15 minutes in length. Sample responses were recorded and then analyzed. The interviews addressed four main questions:

- What are the most important characteristics of a successful school leader?
- From your viewpoint, which leadership style is prevalent among school principals in Kuwait?
- To what extent do school principals in Kuwait exercise servant leadership?
- What servant-leadership behaviors may affect the strategic plans of school departments in Kuwaiti schools?

Results

Question 1: What are the most important characteristics of a successful school leader?

With this question, the researcher sought to identify the different characteristics that a school leader must possess to improve the quality

of processes taking place in the school. Although the study sample voiced varied characteristics, there was a consensus on a number of traits.

Seven out of ten heads of departments participating in this study agreed on the necessity for certain traits in successful school leadership. Some of their responses are given here.

'I think the leadership process isn't an easy task. It requires a person who has a vision for the school future. He must be honest, fair, have confidence, and be decisive.'

'A leader must take the responsibility for others, he must have delegation skills, he should be able to listen to other people's opinions and respect them, and he has to value diversity.'

All the schoolteachers made a link between traits of effective leaders and interpersonal relationships. Some of their responses follow.

'The effective leader is the one who has high levels of interpersonal skills. He must encourage all stakeholders to take active roles in school decisions, he must seek to create an atmosphere of cooperation between all people in the school, and he should work for the benefit of all people within the school.'

'The most important characteristics of an effective school leader are the abilities of inspiring others, communicating with others, and enjoying with open mindedness the ideas of others. He must also be a good delegator, and he must be a caring leader who always seeks to motivate others.'

Question 2: From your viewpoint, which leadership style is prevalent among school principals in Kuwait?

The study sample gave divergent views regarding the prevalent leadership styles practiced by Kuwaiti principals. All heads of departments agreed that authoritative leadership styles were prevalent, while some also saw prevalence of servant-leadership styles.

'I think that the most prevalent school leadership is the authoritative style, where the school principal has control over the school processes. He establishes laws and rules that everyone should follow. He respects everyone within the school, and he is also flexible.'

'In my opinion, I think there are two prevalent leadership styles, the

servant and the authoritative leadership, where the leader listens to us and makes us participate in different decisions related to the school and students. In other words, he shares roles and responsibilities with us.'

The schoolteachers, on the other hand, claimed the existence of three prevalent leadership styles:

'The most prevalent leadership style is transformational leadership, as our school principal always shares the responsibilities with us. He motivates us to show the best performance and have the ability to adapt to new situations.'

'There are two common leadership styles the principals use in Kuwaiti schools. These two styles are servant leadership and authoritative leadership, where the school principals tend to be flexible, seek to analyze in all the school processes and activities, and make us express our viewpoints freely.'

Question 3: To what extent do school principals in Kuwait exercise servant leadership?

The third question was intended to gauge the degree to which Kuwaiti school principals exercise servant leadership and identify the different behaviors associated with this leadership style.

Heads of departments felt that Kuwaiti school principals' practice of servant leadership was moderate and described a number of characteristics they associated with a servant-leadership style.

'The degree to which school principals exercise servant leadership is medium. The most prevalent characteristics associated with this practice are the desire to help us and possession of the ability to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses.'

'The degree to which school principals exercise servant leadership is medium. The most prevalent characteristics associated with this practice are the ability to listen to our voices and the real desire to support all people.'

Consistent with the responses of the department heads, the teachers expressed the view that Kuwaiti school principals' practice of servant leadership was moderate and described a number of the practices and behaviors associated with this leadership style.

'The degree to which school principals exercise servant leadership is

medium. The most prevalent characteristics associated with this practice are sharing of power and responsibilities, encouraging teamwork, and having the ability to sympathize with people.'

'The degree to which school principals exercise servant leadership is medium. The most prevalent characteristics associated with this practice are having a vision for the school, valuing the work of others, not belittling their work, and having the desire to help and support all people.'

Question 4: What servant-leadership behaviors may affect the strategic plans of school departments in Kuwaiti schools?

This question sought to highlight the different servant-leadership behaviors exercised by school principals that may affect the strategic plans of Kuwaiti school departments in schools. Department heads agreed on certain aspects of servant leadership that could have an effect on strategic planning:

'In my opinion, there are two main behaviors that may affect the implementation of strategic plans in school departments. These behaviors are having a vision of the school aims and objectives, and having a comprehensive view of different matters and awareness of changes occurring at the different levels.'

'The servant leaders' behaviors that affect implementation of strategic plans are foresight and conceptualization, as these two characteristics help the school principals to modify the strategic plans in accordance with the national and international trends and orientations.'

Teachers as well agreed generally on characteristic of servant leadership that might affect strategic planning:

'I think that the most important characteristic that helps servant leaders in implementing strategic plans is conceptualization that enables the school leaders to think and act out of the box.'

'From my viewpoint, there are three essential characteristics that enable servant leaders to successfully implement the school departments' strategic plans. These behaviors are conceptualization, foresight, and stewardship.'

Discussion

Question 1

The study sample mentioned several characteristics that a successful Kuwaiti school leader must have: having a vision for the Kuwaiti schools future, honesty, confidence, ability to delegate, ability to listen to others' opinions, and respect for others, valuing diversity, the ability to inspire others, a high level of communication with others, open-mindedness, encouragement of all stakeholders to take active roles in Kuwaiti school decisions, desire to create an atmosphere of cooperation in the school environment. These results are consistent with Alabduljader (2012), who emphasizes the importance of human interaction between the school leadership and followers.

Question 2

The study sample identified the prevalent leadership styles among school principals in Kuwait as authoritative, transformational, and servant leadership. These results are partially supported by Al-Safran et al., (2013), who found a prevalence of an authoritative leadership style among Kuwait school principals.

Question 3

The study sample concurred that the degree to which servant leadership is practiced among Kuwaiti school principals is moderate. The characteristics most cited as being associated with this leadership style were the desire to help others, the ability to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses, the ability to listen to others, sharing of power and responsibilities, encouraging teamwork, and the ability to sympathize with others, valuing the work of others, and having a vision for the whole school. These results differ with Elliott (2012), who described the characteristics of a servant leader as honesty, courage, commitment to family, dedication, flexibility, and informality. The results align with English (2011), who found that the qualities of good leadership were wisdom, organizational stewardship, altruistic calling, emotional healing, and persuasive mapping. The results are also consistent with Nsiah (2009), who listed altruism, patience, compassion, caring for the interests and growth of followers, living by example, and the unselfish desire to serve others among the most important characteristics of servant leaders.

Question 4

The study sample described three main servant-leadership behaviors that may affect the implementation of strategic plans in Kuwaiti school departments: foresight; stewardship; conceptualization; and awareness of different changes occurring at the local, national or international levels. These results are consistent with Njeru et al. (2013) and Chemwei et al. (2014), who found positive relationships between leadership style and implementation of strategic plans in schools.

The most important results of the study can be delineated as follows:

- The qualities of a successful school leader are vision, honesty, and self-confidence. A successful Kuwaiti school leader must possess skill in delegation. He or she should be able to listen to and respect the opinions of others internal or external schools. An effective Kuwaiti schools leader must value diversity in school or in the community. He or she must have the ability to inspire others, communicate well with others, and maintain an open mind. A successful leader encourages all stakeholders to take active roles in school decisions and seeks to create an atmosphere of cooperation among all.
- The prevalent leadership styles among school principals in Kuwait are authoritative, transformational, and servant leader.
- The degree to which servant leadership is practiced among Kuwaiti school principals is moderate. The most prevalent characteristics associated with this practice are the desire to help others, the ability to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses, the ability to listen to others, sharing of power and responsibilities, encouraging teamwork, and the ability to sympathize with others, valuing the work of others, and having a vision for the whole school.
- The behaviors that may affect the implementation of strategic plans in Kuwaiti school departments are foresight, stewardship, conceptualization, and awareness of different changes occurring at the local, national, or international levels.

Recommendations and suggestions

In light of the results mentioned previously, the researcher has formulated the following recommendations and suggestions:

- The Ministry of Education in the state of Kuwait should provide school principals with training programs that can help them to raise the level of servant leadership practiced in educational settings.
- Efforts should be made to raise the awareness of all Kuwaiti school staff regarding the importance of creating an atmosphere of cooperation, sharing of responsibility, and respect.
- Support Kuwaiti school leaders to apply what they get from the training courses as leadership styles or strategic planning.
- Give Kuwaiti school leader and their stakeholders' freedom by transitioning Kuwaiti schools to decentralize in decision, methods and teaching strategies, leading the human resources and financial processes directly, switching to comprehensive assessment of school performance and localizing administrative and vocational training at Kuwaiti schools.
- Future studies would be useful in identifying other effects servant leadership can have on different dimensions of the educational setting.

تأثير القيادة الخادمة على التخطيط الاستراتيجي في مدارس الكويت "دراسة ميدانية"

د. سلطان غالب الديحاني

كلية التربية - جامعة الكويت

دولة الكويت

الملخص

هدف هذا البحث إلى التعرف على أساليب القيادة السائدة لمديري المدارس في دولة الكويت، من خلال النظر في تأثير سلوكيات القيادة الخادمة على التخطيط الاستراتيجي في المدارس، تم جمع البيانات من خلال المقابلات الشخصية لتحديد وجهات نظر عينة الدراسة التي تكونت من ١٠ معلمين و١٠ رؤساء الأقسام من المناطق التعليمية الست في دولة الكويت. وتم دراسة أساليب القيادة الخادمة التي ركزت على امتلاك رؤية واضحة وصادقة، الثقة بالنفس، والتنوع في التقويم، امتلاك مهارات التفويض، القدرة على الاستماع، واحترام آراء الآخرين. وجاءت النتائج لتؤكد توافر أساليب القيادة الخادمة لدى مديري المدارس في دولة الكويت؛ وأنها تؤثر على التخطيط الاستراتيجي خلال تنفيذ الخطط الاستراتيجية والإشراف عليها وزيادة الوعي بالتغييرات المحلية والإقليمية والدولية المرتبطة بالتعليم. وتشمل التوصيات زيادة الوعي العاملين في المدارس الحكومية في دولة بأهمية خلق جو من التعاون والمسؤولية المشتركة، والاحترام المتبادل، وتم اقتراح إجراء دراسات مشابهة تهتم بموضوع أساليب القيادة الخادمة وعلاقتها بالعمليات الإدارية الأخرى في البيئة المدرسية.

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