



The Role of Servant Leadership in Enhancing Organizational Citizenship Behavior: An Analytical Study of the Opinion of Teachers in Private Schools in Soran Independent Administration in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

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ABSTRACT:

The focus of this study was to investigate the role of servant leadership in enhancing organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) in private schools within the Soran Independent Administration of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). The main objective was to examine the impact of servant leadership and its dimensions on the development of OCB among teachers. A descriptive research design with a quantitative approach was employed, using questionnaires to collect data from 170 teachers across 12 private schools in the region. Data were analyzed using SPSS-26. The findings highlight the critical role of servant leadership in fostering and nurturing organizational citizenship behavior among teachers. The results revealed a statistically significant correlation between servant leadership and its dimensions—accountability, empowerment, humility, stewardship, and standing back—and OCB as a whole. Furthermore, the study demonstrated that servant leadership and its dimensions have a significant impact on OCB among teachers. Among these dimensions, stewardship emerged as the most influential in fostering demonstrating organizational citizenship behavior by teachers in their schools. This suggests that principals in private schools exhibit a strong commitment to serving their teachers rather than using their authority for personal gain.

Finally, it is recommended that future research adopt qualitative methods to gain deeper insights, and explore the influence of other leadership styles on enhancing organizational citizenship behavior.

Keywords: Servant Leadership, Organizational Citizenship Behavior, Private Schools, Soran Independent Administration.



1 INTRODUCTION

Servant leadership has emerged as a popular paradigm in current leadership literature, presenting a new paradigm that seeks to develop followers prior to organizational agendas. A number of positive organizational consequences have been linked with this kind of leadership that centers on serving rather than managing subordinates. One of the significant consequences is organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), which includes selfless employees' behaviors that benefit the company but have nothing to do with job responsibility. Servant leadership is a distinctive leadership approach which differs essentially from other traditional styles. Servant leadership focuses on the development of followers, like their psychological health, emotional intelligence, and moral consciousness, whereas other traditional paradigms of leadership are concerned with increasing the economic and non-economic achievements of an organization [1]. As per [2], servant leadership is a leadership philosophy that unites the need to serve and the ambition to lead. Empowering and developing others, humility, honesty, interpersonal acceptance, stewardship, and giving precise instructions are among the essential

characteristics that embody this odd mixture. These actions form a leadership style that is more about developing followers than upholding leader authority. In 1970, Robert K. Greenleaf developed the idea of servant leadership, which emphasizes the leader's position as a servant first, putting employees' needs first and encouraging their development on both a personal and professional level. By emphasizing team member empowerment and uplift, this leadership approach differs from conventional approaches and improves organizational effectiveness [3]. Servant leadership is a philosophy of leadership in which the leader's main goal is to serve. It is a people-centered leadership approach that prioritizes addressing the needs and development of others, particularly followers, over the leader's own interests [4]. Servant leadership is differentiated from other moral theories of leadership (e.g., transformational or ethical leadership) by its integrated emphasis on serving multiple stakeholders and its multi-dimensional behaviors (e.g., empowerment, emotional healing, and ethical modeling) [5]. Furthermore, Servant leadership is characterized by empathy, ethical practice, and employee development; it most influences OCB, which consists of discretionary behaviors that range from assisting coworkers to taking the initiative and helping organizational causes above and beyond job requirements [6]. Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) is voluntary employee behaviors that are not formally rewarded but contribute to making the organization more effective and efficient. Altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue are some examples of OCBs [7]. A distinguishing feature of organizational citizenship conduct is that it is not a required duty of an employee. It symbolizes the time, knowledge, and effort that an employee puts out "for the greater good" as opposed to for remuneration. These behaviors include actions like helping other colleagues, being polite, being conscientious, engaging in civic virtue, and exhibiting sportsmanship, all of which create a healthy and productive working environment [8]. With the right circumstances, practically any kind of action can be regarded as an organizational citizenship example. This is because, in virtually all cases, organizational citizenship conduct entails an employee seeing a need within the company and taking action to address it. For instance, rather than waiting for someone else to clear the photocopier jams, one person in an office where they happen frequently might decide to handle it herself [9]. While OCB is generally positive, some research suggests that there needs to be an exploration of potential negatives, such as citizenship fatigue. Even so, OCB remains a critical construct in explaining voluntary employee contributions that sustain organizational success [10].

In light of the mentioned above, the purpose of this study is to analyze and highlight how and the way that servant leadership impacts organizational citizenship behavior. A quantitative research methodology will be used in the study to address these goals. The rationale quantitative methods are used is because they can produce numerical, empirical data that can be subjected to statistical analysis in order to identify trends and patterns. The major elements of this methodology comprise: survey design, sampling, data collection and data analysis, both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques will be applied to the analysis of the gathered data.

1.1 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Despite an increasingly recognized servant leadership (SL) as a desirable leadership style, there has been some disagreement among researchers regarding its intended impact on organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). The literature that does exist is always in agreement regarding the positive correlation of SL with OCB, yet intervening mechanisms through which servant leadership affects employees' discretionary actions remain obscure [11]. The servant leadership-OCB relationship could be more intricate than initially thought, with possible negative directions that need to be explored. The contextual drivers in the servant leadership-OCB relationship are also less studied. Recent studies have begun to examine such a nexus in specific organizational contexts, such as the discussion on servant leadership-organizational citizenship behavior to examine the influence of servant leadership on organizational citizenship behavior by the intervening role of perceived organizational politics [12]. But industry-specific and cross-cultural variations in this relationship must be researched. Despite evidence of the positive relationship between servant leadership and organizational citizenship behavior, mechanisms (variables) and boundary conditions (moderators) that shape this relationship remain poorly understood, especially across multi-cultural and industrial settings. There is a need for more research to determine how and when servant leadership constructs OCB. This research aims to investigate the role of servant leadership in fostering organizational citizenship behavior within private schools in the Soran Independent Administration. It is an analytical study based on a sample of teachers from these private schools in the Soran independent administration in Kurdistan Region. The study addresses the following questions:

1. To what extent do the principals of private schools in the Soran Independent Administration practice the traits of servant leadership?
2. Are servant leadership and its dimensions significantly correlated with organizational citizenship behaviour among teachers in private schools within the Soran Independent Administration?
3. Does servant leadership and its dimensions have a significant impact on the organizational citizenship behaviour among teachers in private schools within the Soran Independent Administration?
4. Are there statistically significant differences in perceptions of servant leadership based on participants' gender in private schools within the Soran Independent Administration?

1.2 IMPORTANT OF THE STUDY

The importance of this research lies in its ability to help the principals of private schools determine whether their teachers perceive them as servant leadership. Additionally, the research holds significance for the following reasons:

1. This research holds particular scientific importance as it explores the role of servant leadership and its dimensions in enhancing organizational citizenship behaviour among teachers.
2. The study contributes to empirical research on organizational citizenship behaviour, aiding principals in private schools to better understand how they can promote and enhance citizenship behaviour among their teachers.
3. It examines the extent to which private schools have succeeded in fostering citizenship behaviour, among their teachers.
4. It clarifies the role of servant leadership dimensions in instilling citizenship behaviour among teachers.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aims to identify the role of servant leadership on organizational citizenship behaviour in the private schools in Soran independent administration in KRI. The objectives of this study include:

1. Assess the extent to which principals of private schools in the Soran Independent Administration practice the traits of servant leadership.
2. Examine the correlation between servant leadership and its dimensions and organizational citizenship behaviour among teachers in private schools within the Soran Independent Administration.
3. Determine the impact of servant leadership and its dimensions on organizational citizenship behaviour among teachers in private schools within the Soran Independent Administration.
4. Examine whether there are statistically significant differences in perceptions of servant leadership based on participants' gender in private schools within the Soran Independent Administration.

1.4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

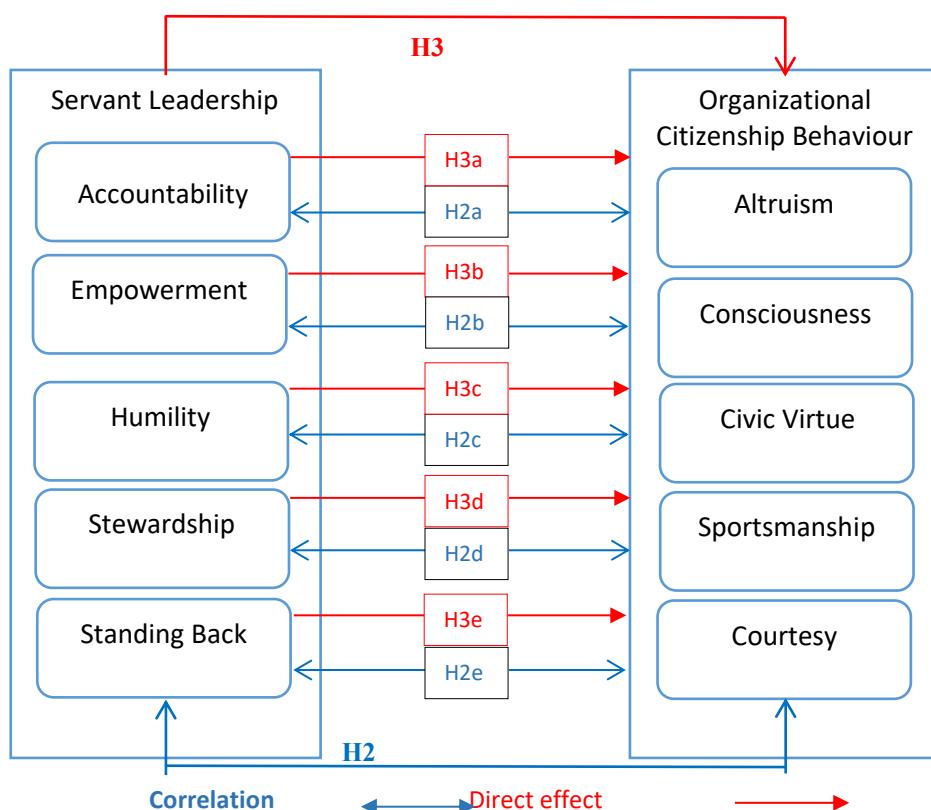


FIGURE 1. Conceptual Framework developed by Researchers

1.5 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following are the hypotheses of this research:

Hypothesis One: Teachers working in private schools within the Soran Independent Administration in the Kurdistan Region perceive their principals as servant leaders to a statistically significant degree.

Hypothesis Two: Servant leadership is statistically significantly correlated to organizational citizenship behaviour in private schools in Soran independent administration in the Kurdistan region of Iraq at a significance level of 0.05.

Hypothesis 2_a: There is a statistically significant positive correlation between accountability and organizational citizenship behaviour in private schools within the Soran Independent Administration, at a significance level of 0.05.

Hypothesis 2_b: There is a statistically significant positive correlation between empowerment and organizational citizenship behaviour in private schools within the Soran Independent Administration, at a significance level of 0.05.

Hypothesis 2_c: There is a statistically significant positive correlation between humility and organizational citizenship behaviour in private schools within the Soran Independent Administration, at a significance level of 0.05.

Hypothesis 2_d: There is a statistically significant positive correlation between stewardship and organizational citizenship behaviour in private schools within the Soran Independent Administration, at a significance level of 0.05.

Hypothesis 2_e: There is a statistically significant positive correlation between standing back and organizational citizenship behaviour in private schools within the Soran Independent Administration, at a significance level of 0.05.

Hypothesis Three: Servant leadership and its dimensions have a statistically significant positive impact on organizational citizenship behaviour in governmental schools within the Soran Independent Administration, at a significance level of 0.05.

Hypothesis 3_a: Accountability has a statistically significant impact on organizational citizenship behaviour at a significance level of 0.05.

Hypothesis 3_b: Empowerment has a statistically significant impact on organizational citizenship behaviour at a significance level of 0.05.

Hypothesis 3_c: Humility has a statistically significant impact on organizational citizenship behaviour at a significance level of 0.05.

Hypothesis 3_d: Stewardship has a statistically significant impact on organizational citizenship behaviour at a significance level of 0.05.

Hypothesis 3_e: Standing back has a statistically significant impact on organizational citizenship behaviour at a significance level of 0.05.

Hypothesis Four: There are statistically significant differences in perceptions of servant leadership based on participants' gender in private schools within the Soran Independent Administration, at a significance level of 0.05."

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Servant leadership that is characterized by putting self-interest second to others' needs and assisting them to develop has increasingly been advocated for having a positive impact on employees' behavior and attitudes. This study examines the relationship between servant leadership and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and fills significant knowledge gaps in the understanding of this powerful leadership phenomenon. The present study aims at examining the impact of servant leadership on organizational citizenship behavior under the mediating effect of perceived organizational politics [12], building on existing theoretical foundations as well as exploring previously under researched mechanisms. This research mainly attempts to investigate the impact of servant leadership on organizational citizenship behavior among employees and whether organizational citizenship behavior mediates their relationships Direct and indirect effects of servant leadership style on employee creativity [13].

2.1.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Servant leadership has attracted significant attention in recent years due to its profound impact on both organizational and individual outcomes. Driven by ethical and moral principles, servant leadership prioritizes followers' needs—i.e., employees, customers, and stakeholders—over the self-interest of the leader, and it builds a culture of trust, growth, and lasting success [14]. Unlike other leadership models, servant leadership relies on humility, empathy, and serving with altruistic calling, appealing to the evolving needs of modern workforces—most importantly Millennials and Gen Z who prioritize well-being and ethical leadership [15] [16]. Moreover, its systemic orientation considers not only organizational results but also public good, and thus it is a necessary framework for building long-term, moral, and people-centric

leadership [17]. Empirical studies emphasize its differentiation from transformational or autocratic leadership in that it forms a "servant-first" culture that drives performance and healthy workplace culture [14].

2.1.2 THE DIMENSIONS OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP

According to [18] [19] [20], the key dimensions of servant leadership include accountability, empowerment, humility, stewardship, and standing back. These dimensions were adopted in this study due to their consistent validation across the cited sources and their strong compatibility with the dependent variable.

2.1.2.1 ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability is a key component of the servant leadership framework, which describes how leaders empower followers while also taking accountability for results. It is holding followers accountable for accomplishments over which they have control. This necessitates communicating expectations clearly and assigning suitable job responsibility [21]. Accountability, a fundamental dimension of servant leadership, is the leader's duty to maintain the highest moral standards, guarantee openness in decision-making, and encourage a sense of ownership among followers. Accountability in the servant leadership framework is relational as well as self-directed, with leaders holding both themselves and others accountable for their commitments in a way that fosters respect and progress [14].

2.1.2.2 EMPOWERMENT

A key component of servant leadership is empowerment, which highlights the leader's responsibility to promote followers' independence, development, and self-assurance. By giving others control, promoting self-directed decision-making, and giving followers the tools and resources, they need to thrive, servant leaders enable others [22]. In servant leadership, empowerment is based on a strong relationship, trust, and belief in followers' abilities. This is consistent with the larger servant leadership tenet of putting the growth of others before one's own interests [18].

2.1.2.3 HUMILITY

Humility is the foundation of servant leadership, which strengthens the leader's service orientation and increases their influence on followers and organizational results [23]. According to [18], humility is a fundamental quality that empowers followers and fosters collaborative decision-making by allowing leaders to appreciate the contributions and capabilities of others.

2.1.2.4 STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship was a significant determinant of employee engagement and commitment, indicating that good stewardship might boost motivation and job satisfaction. Stewardship is a crucial component of servant leadership since it encourages accountable management, employee dedication, and trust [24]. [18] asserts that stewardship entails a strong feeling of obligation and the readiness to assume responsibility for the organization's ideals as well as the interests of the community, placing an emphasis on service over self-interest. By their dedication to the common good, steward leaders see themselves as role models who encourage accountability and trust.

2.1.2.5 STANDING BACK

Standing back is a crucial aspect of servant leadership that highlights a leader's readiness to put others' needs first, offer assistance when needed, and go into the background so that followers can claim accomplishments [25]. By standing back, in addition to fostering the growth of followers, servant leaders foster trust and increase the organization's overall [26].

2.2 ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR:

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) refers to voluntary, discretionary behaviors from employees that transcend the required norms of their work yet significantly support organizational effectiveness through the creation of a positive psychological and social working environment [27]. [7] first coined the term OCB, and it encompasses behaviors such as altruism (assisting others), conscientiousness (exceeding role expectations), and civic virtue (participating in organizational governance). Perceived organizational justice, trust in leaders, psychological ownership is some of the primary antecedents, which stimulate employees to express gratitude in the form of extra-role behavior [28]. Excessive OCB demands, however, evoke "compulsory citizenship behavior" when the employees feel obligated to offer unpaid labor, which may evoke resentment and burnout [14]. Cross-cultural studies show variation in dimensions of OCB, such that collectivist cultures emphasize group-oriented behaviors (e.g., protecting company property) as compared to individualist cultures [29].

2.2.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR:

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) is a key feature of effective organizational functioning, reflecting spontaneous, discretionary acts of employees that cross the boundaries of formal job roles to enhance social and psychological aspects of the workplace [9]. Research indicates that OCB contributes to organizational performance through enhanced collaboration, reduced conflict, and facilitating a spirit of collaboration, which, in turn, raises

productivity, efficiency, and innovation [30]. The absence of OCB can decrease organizational effectiveness by increasing turnover intentions, reducing morale, and injuring stakeholder relationships [9]. Leadership is the catalyst of the development of OCB through the facilitation of a fair, supportive, and psychologically empowering workplace climate that strengthens employees' intrinsic motivation to do work above and beyond their formal job expectations. Hence, knowledge and promotion of OCB is essential in ensuring sustained organizational success and employees' well-being [31].

2.2.2 THE DIMENSIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR

According to [32] [33] [34] [35] [36] [37] [38] [39], organizational citizenship behavior has five dimensions as described below:

2.2.2.1 ALTRUISM

Altruism is referred to helping behavior that encompasses all voluntary actions that provide preference to a particular individual in the accomplishment of an organization's relevant task [32]. The act of a member of an organization showing altruism is lending a helping hand to colleagues who are having a hard time in the current circumstance without seeking anything in response [33]. Altruism is the quality of having greater concern for other people [34].

2.2.2.2 CONSCIOUSNESS

Consciousness is referred to a person who understands their obligations will willingly take on more duties, fulfil them on time, and be able to finish projects that fall outside of their specific purview [33]. The term "conscientiousness" describes a set of actions that, even in the absence of an observer, contribute to a positive and balanced work environment. Professional pride and care are characteristics of conscientious behavior, which surpasses the organization's minimum criteria and general conformity [35]. Workers that exhibit consciousness in their work must be exact and cautious. Time effectiveness on schedule, and regular attendance are examples of how this shows up and contributes to a trustworthy environment [37].

2.2.2.3 CIVIC VIRTUE

Civic virtue is contributing positively to an organization's operations and going above and beyond what is asked of one's direct supervisor [32]. Civic virtue is exhibited by those who support the community outreach and professional operation of the organization via their voluntary participation in it. A member of an organization who want to take part in or be involved in the celebrations of their colleagues' accomplishments is known as a cheerleader [33]. The degree of preparedness and interest demonstrated in actively engaging in the political affairs of the organization is referred to as civic virtue [35].

2.2.2.4 SPORTSMANSHIP

Sportsmanship includes actions that prioritize doing the right thing in an organization over doing the wrong thing [32]. Sportsmanship is the practice of highlighting the positive parts of circumstances that are not ideal inside the organization without drawing criticism. Examples of this behavior include refusing to protest, complaining even in difficult situations, and downplaying minor issues [33]. implies that workers should be upbeat even when things at work are not going their way and be prepared to give up their own interests in order to further the success of the organization [36].

2.2.2.5 COURTESY

Courtesy refers to the practice of upholding positive relationships with coworkers in order to prevent interpersonal conflicts. This can be achieved by showing others respect and attention or by acting to lessen and ease an issue [33]. Courtesy is demonstrated by employees who consider other employees' or superiors' advice or considerations before acting or making decisions, as well as by providing important details in order to solve problems. Courtesy is defined as behavior that attempts to avoid work problems with coworkers or within the organization [38]. Courtesy is a respectful approach towards other people's work—without expressing any questions [39].

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 RESEARCH METHOD AND TARGET POPULATION

This research adopts a quantitative method for data collection and analysis, focusing on determining the role of servant leadership in enhancing organizational citizenship behavior and evaluating its impact. The census sampling technique was employed, as the entire population of teachers in private schools within the Soran Independent Administration was targeted for data collection. The target population included teachers from private schools in Soran, Rawandoz, Choman, and Mergasur. In total, 275 teachers were surveyed using distributed questionnaires.

3.2 QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

The data for this study were collected using a structured questionnaire, designed to address the research objectives and questions. The questionnaire consists of three main parts. The first part collects demographic information about the participants, including age, gender, educational level, years of experience, and the school in which they teach, providing context for understanding their responses. The second part measures the independent variable, servant leadership, across five dimensions, with three items for each dimension, totaling 15 items. The third part evaluates the dependent variable, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), also across five dimensions, with three items per dimension, contributing another 15 items. In total, the questionnaire contains 30 items covering the 10 dimensions, excluding the demographic questions. All items are measured using a Likert-type scale, enabling participants to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with each statement. This design ensures comprehensive coverage of both the independent and dependent variables, facilitating accurate quantitative analysis.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION AND SAMPLE SELECTION

Questionnaires are essential tools for collecting primary data in practical research, providing researchers with control over sample selection and question types [40]. In this study, primary data were gathered using a questionnaire, with a comprehensive sampling technique. The questionnaire targeted 275 teachers from private schools within the Soran independent administration, with 170 teachers ultimately participating to explore the role of servant leadership on organizational citizenship behavior. The questionnaires were administered in both English and Kurdish to ensure clarity and accessibility, given that these are the official languages used in most private schools. To determine the required sample size, the following formula was applied, assuming a 95% confidence level and $P = 0.05$:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{275}{1 + 275(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{275}{1.6875}$$

$$n = 162.96$$

Table 1. Distributing according to participants from Private Schools

No.	Name of Schools	Colleges/institutes	
		Frequency	Percent
1	Kodo Educational Foundation	35	19.1
2	Ishik Soran International School	16	8.7
3	Slivana Private School	15	8.2
4	Zanst Soran International Schools	13	7.1
5	Korek Private School	17	9.3
6	Dayik Private School	15	8.2
7	Yad Private School	21	11.5
8	Darwaza Private School	10	5.5
9	Barzan Private School	11	6
10	Dwarozh Private School	9	4.9
11	Lutka Pricate School	3	1.6
12	Dolavazhe Private School	5	2.7
		Total	170
			100.0

Source: by the researcher from the results of the program (SPSS-26).

Table 1 shows the distribution of participants according to their name of private schools out of a total of 170 participants, the highest number of respondents is in Kodo educational foundation with 35 (19.1), The lowest participation was at Lutka Private School, with 3 (1.6). This low participation may be due to the teachers' lack of enthusiasm for scientific work and their limited regard for the importance of scientific results.

3.4 RELIABILITY MEASUREMENT

Table 2 shows the results of the reliability analysis using the Cronbach's Alpha method. All dimensions of both Servant Leadership and Organizational Citizenship Behavior recorded high reliability values, ranging from 0.842 to 0.929, indicating strong internal consistency among the items. The overall reliability for Servant Leadership ($\alpha = 0.957$) and OCB ($\alpha = 0.949$) demonstrates that the questionnaire is highly reliable. Therefore, the measurement tool used in this study is consistent and suitable for further statistical analysis.

Table 2. Reliability measurement through Alpha-Cronbach method

Variables	Dimensions	Items' No	Reliability Value
Servant Leadership [SL]	Accountability	3	0.878
	Empowerment	3	0.929
	Humility	3	0.892
	Stewardship	3	0.907
	Standing back	3	0.842
Servant Leadership [SL]		15	0.957
Organizational Citizenship Behavior [OCB]	Altruism	3	0.865
	Conscientiousness	3	0.862
	Sportsmanship	3	0.849
	Courtesy	3	0.907
	Civic Virtue	3	0.928
Organizational Citizenship Behavior [OCB]		15	0.949
Overall questionnaire		30	

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the outputs of the (SPSS-26) program.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS TOOLS AND MEASUREMENTS

The data was analyzed using various statistical techniques with SPSS version 26.0. Descriptive statistics, frequency analysis, and reliability assessments were conducted. The correlation coefficient measured the strength of the linear relationship between servant leadership and organizational citizenship behavior, while multiple linear regression was used for statistical analysis and hypothesis testing.

3.5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.5.1 SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Table 3 presents the distribution of participants based on gender, age, education level, years of service, and type of employment among a total of 170 participants. In terms of the gender of the participants, 63 (37.1%) are male, and 107 (62.9%) are female, reflecting a higher employment rate of females in private schools in the Soran independent administration. This gender difference is largely influenced by cultural norms and women's preferences, as families often consider teaching a more suitable profession for their daughters than other fields. It may also reflect women's own interest in the education sector, as well as the limited job opportunities available in other sectors.

Regarding age, the majority of participants are between 20-30 years old (147 participants, 86.5%), while the smallest group is between 31-40 (23 participants, 13.5%). This distribution indicates that the majority of private school teachers in Soran are young. This can be attributed to two main factors: First, the poor economic situation in the Kurdistan Region over the past decade, which has limited public sector hiring since 2014. Second, the high demand for private schools to employment this category of teachers for financial reasons.

In terms of educational background, the majority of participants hold a bachelor's degree (150 participants, 88.2%), with only a small fraction having a PhD degree (1 participant, 0.6%). This trend indicates that individuals with bachelor's

degrees are more inclined to work in the education sector, as it offers more job opportunities for highly qualified individuals compared to other sectors. Additionally, given the current financial situation, private school administrators are more willing to employ this group.

Also, the distribution of years of service shows that most participants have 1-5 years of experience (135 participants, 79.4%), while those with 16-20 years of service represent the smallest group (1 participant, 0.6%). This pattern appears to result from the young age of private school teachers, who naturally have fewer years of service. Finally, regarding the employment type of teachers in these schools, full-time/contract-based positions are the most common (103 participants, 60.6%), while visiting roles are the least common (3 participants, 1.8%). This suggests that teachers in private schools carry significant responsibilities, as school administrations prefer them to fully commit their time and skills to the private schools, rather than dividing their efforts elsewhere.

Table 3. Respondent profile

Gender		
Number of Ages	Frequency	Percent
Male	63	37.1
Female	107	62.9
Total	170	100.0
Age		
20-30	147	86.5
31-40	23	13.5
Total	170	100.0
Education Level		
Diploma	9	5.3
Bachelor	150	88.2
Higher Diploma	3	1.8
Master	7	4.1
PhD	1	0.6
Total	170	100.0
Years of Service		
1-5	135	79.4
6-10	25	14.7
11-15	9	5.3
16-20	1	0.6
Total	170	100.0
Type of Employment		
Permanent	13	7.6
Contract/full time	103	60.6
Contract/part time	51	30.0
Visitor	3	1.8
Total	170	100.0

Source: by the researcher from the results of the program (SPSS-26)

3.5.2 TESTING THE HYPOTHESIS OF TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR PRINCIPALS AS SERVANT LEADERS

Table (4) reveals the conclusive outcomes associated with different dimensions of servant leadership. This encompasses the weighted arithmetic mean, response rate, importance order, and the arrangement of dimensions. These metrics collectively facilitate the understanding of the degree of agreement and uniformity within the responses provided by a selected sample of respondents.

Table 4. The level of teachers' perceptions of their principals as servant leaders

Questions	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree		Weighted Arithmetic Mean	Response rate%	Importance Order
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
Acct1	5	2.9	3	1.8	8	4.7	51	30	103	60.6	4.44	88	1
Acct2	5	2.9	3	1.8	8	4.7	79	46.5	75	44.1	4.27	85.4	2
Acct3	5	2.9	2	1.2	8	4.7	82	48.2	73	42.9	4.27	85.4	2
ACCT	8	4.7	0.00	0.00	14	8.2	97	57.1	51	30	4.32	86.4	2nd
Emp1	8	4.7	3	1.8	13	7.6	54	31.8	92	54.1	4.29	85.8	3
Emp2	6	3.5	2	1.2	7	4.1	42	24.7	113	66.5	4.49	89.8	1
Emp3	5	2.9	4	2.4	12	7.1	58	34.7	90	52.9	4.33	86.6	2
EMP	6	3.5	5	2.9	13	7.6	72	42.4	74	43.5	4.37	87.4	1st
Hum1	9	5.3	6	3.5	19	11.2	85	50.0	51	30.0	3.96	79.2	1
Hum2	6	3.5	2	1.2	11	6.5	61	35.9	90	52.9	4.34	86.8	1
Hum3	7	4.1	2	1.2	16	9.4	69	40.6	76	44.7	4.21	84.2	2
HUM	15	8.8	0	0.00	19	11.2	94	55.3	42	24.7	4.17	83.4	5th
Stw1	6	3.5	5	2.9	15	8.8	60	35.3	84	49.4	4.24	84.8	2
Stw2	5	2.9	4	2.4	11	10.0	59	41.2	91	43.5	4.34	86.8	1
stw3	7	4.1	2	1.2	16	9.4	69	40.6	76	44.7	4.2	84	3
STW	6	3.5	4	2.4	23	13.5	81	47.6	56	32.9	4.26	85.2	3rd
SB1	6	3.5	5	2.9	15	8.8	60	35.3	84	49.4	4.09	81.8	3
SB2	5	2.9	4	2.4	11	10.0	59	41.2	91	43.5	4.24	84.8	1
SB3	7	4.1	2	1.2	16	9.4	69	40.6	76	44.7	4.22	84.4	2
SB	6	3.5	4	2.4	23	13.5	81	47.6	56	32.9	4.18	83.6	4th
SL	11	6.5	0	0.00	30	17.6	101	59.4	28	16.5	4.26	85.2	

Source: by the researcher from the results of the program (SPSS-26)

The findings in Table 4 indicate a strong perception among teachers that the principals of private school's exhibit servant leadership. Empowerment ranked highest ($M = 4.37, 87.4\%$), while humility ranked lowest ($M = 4.17, 83.4\%$). The highest-rated item reflects the principals' willingness to encourage teachers to propose new ideas ($M = 4.49, 89.8\%$),

whereas the lowest-rated item pertains to principals admitting their mistakes ($M = 3.96, 79.2\%$). The overall arithmetic mean for servant leadership is 4.26, with a response rate of 85.2%, confirming acceptance of the first hypothesis, which asserts: ***"Teachers working in private schools within the Soran Independent Administration in the Kurdistan Region perceive their principals as servant leaders to a statistically significant degree."***

3.5.3 TESTING THE HYPOTHESES OF THE CORRELATIONS BETWEEN THE VARIABLES OF THE STUDY

Table 5 will discuss the results of testing and analyzing the correlation relationships between the variables of the study and their relevant hypotheses. The hypotheses specified in the main hypotheses and the sub-hypotheses originating from them will be tested successively as outlined in the study methodology.

Table 5. Correlations between Servant Leadership, its Dimensions and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

The Correlation Coefficient	Servant leadership	Accountability	Empowerment	Humility	Stewardship	Standing back
Organizational Citizenship Behavior	0.807**	0.771**	0.741**	0.697**	0.776**	0.739**
Sig. (2tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

Source: the researcher based on the SPSS (26) results

** $P < .001$

a) Table 5 displays the outcomes of a correlation analysis examining servant leadership and organizational citizenship behaviour. The analysis uncovers a robust positive correlation ($R = 0.807$) between these variables. This suggests that higher levels of servant leadership correspond to increased organizational citizenship behaviour. The statistical significance of this link is affirmed by a p-value (Sig.) of 0.000. Consequently, the first hypothesis, asserting ***"Servant leadership is statistically significantly correlated to organizational citizenship behaviour in private schools in Soran independent administration in the Kurdistan region of Iraq at a significance level of (0.05)"***, can be accepted at a significance level of 0.05.

b) The results reveal a robust positive correlation ($r = 0.771**$) between Accountability and organizational citizenship behaviour, emphasizing the statistical significance with a p-value (Sig.) of 0.000. Hypothesis 1a, ***"There is a statistically significant positive correlation between accountability and organizational citizenship behaviour at a significance level of (0.05)"***, is confidently accepted.

c) Findings demonstrate a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.741**$) between empowerment and organizational citizenship behavior, supported by a significant p-value (Sig.) of 0.000. Hypothesis 1b, ***"There is a statistically significant positive correlation between empowerment and organizational citizenship behavior at a significance level of (0.05)"***, is strongly supported, suggesting that leaders with empowerment influence teachers' citizenship behavior in the schools.

d) The results show a compelling positive correlation ($r = 0.697**$) between humility and organizational citizenship behavior, supported by a significant p-value (Sig.) of 0.000. Hypothesis 1c, ***"There is a statistically significant positive correlation between humility and organizational citizenship behavior at a significance level of (0.05)"***, is firmly supported, highlighting the importance of leaders' humility in fostering citizenship behavior among teachers.

e) The findings indicate a notable positive correlation ($r = 0.776**$) between stewardship and organizational citizenship behavior, with a significant p-value (Sig.) of 0.000. Hypothesis 1d, ***"There is a statistically significant positive correlation between stewardship and organizational citizenship behavior at a significance level of (0.05)"***, is confidently accepted, indicating a strong relationship between stewardship and organizational citizenship behavior.

f) Lastly, standing back exhibits a notable positive correlation ($r = 0.739**$), confirmed by a significant p-value (Sig.) of 0.000. Hypothesis 1e, ***"There is a statistically significant positive correlation between standing back and organizational citizenship behavior at a significance level of (0.05)"***, is confidently accepted, signifying a strong relationship between standing back and organizational citizenship behavior.

In conclusion, servant leadership, characterized by accountability, empowerment, humility, stewardship, and standing back, significantly contributes to enhancing citizenship behavior among teachers.

3.5.4 TESTING THE REGRESSION HYPOTHESES BETWEEN THE VARIABLES OF THE STUDY

In this section, the effect of servant leadership and its dimensions namely (accountability, empowerment, humility, stewardship, and standing back) on organizational citizenship behavior will be discussed. Linear regression model is formed to represent and analyze this relationship.

Table 6. Testing the effect hypotheses between the independent variable (servant leadership) and its dimensions in relation to dependent variable (organizational citizenship behavior)

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	R Square	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error				
Servant Leadership	0.693	0.039	0.807	0.6050	17.683	0.000
Accountability	0.675	0.043	0.771	0.595	15.714	0.000
Empowerment	0.566	0.040	0.741	0.550	14.324	0.000
Humility	0.543	0.043	0.697	0.486	12.575	0.000
Stewardship	0.611	0.038	0.776	0.602	15.935	0.000
Standing back	0.572	0.040	0.739	0.546	14.219	0.000

Dependent Variable: Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Source: the researcher based on the SPSS (26) results

**P<.001

a) The Second Main Hypotheses

The results in the table 6 reveal that servant leadership have a significant and positive impact on organizational citizenship behavior. For each unit increase in servant leadership, there is an estimated increase of 0.693 units in organizational citizenship behavior ($B = 0.693$). A one standard deviation increase in servant leadership is associated with a 0.807 standard deviation increase in organizational citizenship behavior ($Beta = 0.807$). Approximately 59.5% of the variance in organizational citizenship behavior can be explained by variations in servant leadership ($R^2 = 0.595$). The coefficient for servant leadership is statistically significant, with a t-value of 15.714. The p-value (Sig.) is 0.000, indicating a strong statistical significance. The results suggest that schools and principal who prioritize and demonstrate servant leadership behaviors can significantly enhance organizational citizenship behavior. Therefore, the second hypothesis, which states, ***“Servant leadership has a statistically significant impact on organizational citizenship behavior in private schools in Soran independent administration in the Kurdistan region of Iraq at a significance level of (0.05).”*** can be accepted.

b) The First Sub-hypothesis of the Second Main Hypotheses

Based on the results in the table 6, any increase in accountability is associated with a positive impact on organizational citizenship behavior. For each unit increase in accountability, there is an estimated increase of 0.675 units in organizational citizenship behavior ($B = 0.675$). A one standard deviation increase in accountability corresponds to a 0.771 standard deviation increase in organizational citizenship behavior ($Beta = 0.771$). Approximately 45.6% of the variance in organizational citizenship behavior can be explained by variations in accountability ($R^2 = 0.456$). The coefficient for accountability is statistically significant, with a t-value of 12.307. The p-value (Sig.) is 0.000, indicating a strong statistical significance. The findings suggest that principals who foster accountability can significantly enhance organizational citizenship behavior. Accountability is a meaningful predictor of organizational citizenship behavior. Hence, hypothesis 2_a, which posits that ***“Accountability has a statistically significant impact on organizational citizenship behavior at a significance level of (0.05).”***, can be affirmed.

c) The Second Sub-hypothesis among the Second Main Hypotheses

In accordance with the findings presented in table 6, empowerment exhibits a significant and positive impact on organizational citizenship behavior. The unstandardized coefficient (B) for empowerment is 0.566, signifying that each one-unit increase in empowerment corresponds to a 0.566-unit increase in organizational citizenship behavior. Furthermore, the standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.741 indicates that a one standard deviation increase in empowerment is associated with a 0.741 standard deviation increase in organizational citizenship behavior. The R square value of 0.550 reveals that approximately 55% of the variance in organizational citizenship behavior can be accounted for by variations in empowerment. The t-value of 14.324 underscores the statistical significance of the empowerment coefficient. A higher t-value reflects increased confidence in the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. The associated p-value (Sig.) of 0.000, falling below the conventional threshold of 0.05, confirms the statistical significance of the relationship between empowerment and organizational citizenship behavior. These findings suggest

that leaders with a strong empowerment compass have a positive influence on organizational citizenship behavior. Consequently, based on these results, hypothesis 2_b, can be accepted as it strongly implies that "***Empowerment has a statistically significant impact on organizational citizenship behavior at a significance level of (0.05).***"

d) The Third Sub-hypothesis among the Second Main Hypotheses

In line with the findings presented in table 6, it is evident that humility significantly impacts organizational citizenship behavior. The unstandardized coefficient (B) of 0.543 reveals that a one-unit increase in humility corresponds to a 0.543-unit increase in organizational citizenship behavior. Moreover, the standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.697 indicates that a one standard deviation increase in organizational citizenship behavior leads to a 0.697 standard deviation increase in organizational citizenship behavior. The R square value of 0.486 suggests that 48.6 % of the variability in organizational citizenship behavior can be explained by variations in humility. The t-value of 12.575 signifies the statistical significance of the coefficient for humility, indicating a strong relationship between the variables. These findings suggest that principals with a strong humility compass have a positive influence on organizational citizenship behavior. Additionally, the associated p-value (Sig.) of 0.000, below the conventional threshold of 0.05, confirms the statistical significance of the relationship between humility and organizational citizenship behavior. The results firmly suggest that "***Humility has a statistically significant impact on organizational citizenship behavior at a significance level of (0.05).***" So, hypothesis 2_c can be affirmed.

e) The Fourth Sub-hypothesis among the Second Main Hypotheses

The results of the table 6, reveals a significant impact of stewardship on organizational citizenship behavior. The unstandardized coefficient (B) of 0.611 indicates that a one-unit increase in stewardship is associated with a 0.611-unit increase in organizational citizenship behavior. Similarly, the standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.776 suggests that a one standard deviation increase in stewardship corresponds to a 0.776 standard deviation increase in organizational citizenship behavior. The R square value of 0.602 indicates that approximately 60.2% of the variability in organizational citizenship behavior can be explained by variations in stewardship. This indicates that stewardship is a meaningful predictor of organizational citizenship behavior. Furthermore, the t-value of 15.935 reflects the statistical significance of the coefficient for stewardship, signifying a strong relationship between the variables. The associated p-value (Sig.) of 0.000, which falls below the conventional threshold of 0.05, confirms the statistical significance of the relationship between stewardship and organizational citizenship behavior. In summary, these findings suggest that organizational citizenship behaviour plays a crucial role in influencing organizational citizenship behavior. The results provide compelling evidence that "***stewardship has a statistically significant impact on organizational citizenship behavior at a significance level of (0.05).***" Consequently, hypothesis 2_d can be accepted.

f) The fifth Sub-hypothesis of the Second Main Hypotheses

The results in the table 6 reveal that standing back has a significant and positive impact on organizational citizenship behavior for each unit increase in standing back, there is an estimated increase of 0.593 units in organizational citizenship behavior (B = 0.593). A one standard deviation increases in standing back is associated with a 0.682 standard deviation increase in organizational citizenship behavior (Beta = 0.682). Approximately 46.6% of the variance in organizational citizenship behavior can be explained by variations in standing back (R Square = 0.466). The coefficient for standing back is statistically significant, with a t-value of 12.563. The p-value (Sig.) is 0.000, indicating a strong statistical significance. The results suggest that schools and principals who prioritize and demonstrate standing back behaviors can significantly enhance organizational citizenship behavior. Therefore, Hypothesis 2_e, which states, "***Standing back has a statistically significant impact on organizational citizenship behavior in private schools in Soran independent administration in the Kurdistan region of Iraq at a significance level of (0.05).***", can be accepted.

3.5.5 TESTING THE HYPOTHESIS OF THE LEVEL OF VARIANCE IN SERVANT LEADERSHIP PERCEIVED BY TEACHERS AS DEMONSTRATED BY PRINCIPALS OF PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Table 7 reveals the conclusive outcomes associated with different dimensions of servant leadership. This encompasses the weighted arithmetic mean, response rate, importance order, and the arrangement of dimensions. These metrics collectively facilitate the understanding of the degree of agreement and uniformity within the responses provided by a selected sample of respondents.

Table 7. The level servant leadership perceived by teachers as demonstrated by principals of private schools according to the gender of participants

Independent Samples T test for the dimensions of servant leadership							
Statements	Gender	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Accountability	Male	-1.375	168	0.171	4.2175	-0.17039	0.12392
	Female				4.3879		
Empowerment	Male	-2.485	168	0.014	4.1524	-0.34845	0.140298
	Female				4.5009		
Humility	Male	-2.267	168	0.025	3.9714	0.31268	0.13791
	Female				4.2841		
Stewardship	Male	-2.336	168	0.019	4.0587	-0.32164	0.13621
	Female				4.3804		
Standing back	Male	-1.617	168	0.108	4.0413	-0.22602	0.13977
	Female				4.2673		
Servant Leadership	Male	-2.124	168	0.035	4.0968	-0.26579	0.12516
	Female				4.3626		

Source: the researcher based on the SPSS (26) results

a) Accountability: Female teachers (Mean = 4.3879) perceived a slightly higher level of accountability than male teachers (Mean = 4.2175), but the difference was not statistically significant ($t = -1.375$, $p = 0.171$), indicating that gender does not have a significant effect on this dimension.

b) Empowerment: Female teachers (Mean = 4.5009) reported a significantly higher perception of empowerment compared to male teachers (Mean = 4.1524). The difference was statistically significant ($t = -2.485$, $p = 0.014$), suggesting gender has a meaningful influence on this aspect.

c) Humility: Female teachers (Mean = 4.2841) rated their principals significantly higher than male teachers (Mean = 3.9714). The difference was statistically significant ($t = -2.267$, $p = 0.025$), indicating gender plays an important role in perceptions of humility.

d) Stewardship: Female teachers (Mean = 4.3804) had significantly higher ratings for stewardship than males (Mean = 4.0587), with a statistically significant difference ($t = -2.336$, $p = 0.019$), showing gender influences this dimension.

e) Standing Back: Although female teachers (Mean = 4.2673) rated this dimension higher than males (Mean = 4.0413), the difference was not statistically significant ($t = -1.617$, $p = 0.108$), indicating no strong gender effect on this behaviour.

f) Overall Servant Leadership: Female teachers (Mean = 4.3626) perceived significantly higher overall servant leadership than male teachers (Mean = 4.0968). The difference was statistically significant ($t = -2.124$, $p = 0.035$), suggesting that gender plays a meaningful role in shaping overall perceptions.

In conclusion, based on the results, Hypothesis One, which states, "***There are statistically significant differences in perceptions of servant leadership based on participants' gender in private schools within the Soran Independent Administration, at a significance level of 0.05.***" is accepted, except for the dimensions of Accountability and Standing Back.

4 DISCUSSION

This study confirms that servant leadership significantly enhances organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) among teachers in private schools within the Soran Independent Administration. All five dimensions—especially stewardship—

were found to positively influence OCB, indicating that principals who lead with a service-oriented mindset foster greater voluntary and supportive behaviors among staff. These findings align with [41] and [42], who found positive relationships between servant leadership and OCB. Unlike some studies that identified indirect effects through variables like organizational justice [43] or trust [44], our results show a strong direct effect, especially through stewardship, which seems to naturally build trust and commitment. While [45] emphasized the mediating role of organizational commitment, and [46] favored spiritual leadership in universities, our study highlights servant leadership as particularly effective in the school context of Kurdistan, where relational leadership matters greatly.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the analysed data, conclusions have been drawn, and corresponding recommendations and future actions are proposed. This involves summarizing key findings, acknowledging the study's limitations, and providing practical and actionable suggestions. The recommendations are designed to be clear, feasible, and beneficial, while also taking into account potential challenges and opportunities identified throughout the research

CONCLUSION

The primary objective of this study was to evaluate the role of servant leadership on enhancing organizational citizenship behavior. A quantitative approach is employed, resulting in the collection of 170 questionnaires from teachers across 12 private schools within the Soran independent administration in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The principal findings are detailed below:

1. The study found a higher representation of female teachers in private schools, is mainly due to cultural norms, women's interest in education, and limited job opportunities in other sectors.
2. Most of the sample consisted of young participants, mainly due to the weak economic situation in the region, which has limited public recruitment since 2014 and led private schools to prefer hiring younger teachers over experienced ones for financial reasons.
3. Full-time contractual employment predominates, indicating that private schools expect teachers to fully dedicate their time and skills, reflecting the significant responsibilities placed on them
4. A strong positive correlation was identified between servant leadership and its dimensions with organizational citizenship behavior, demonstrating a significant relationship between these variables.
5. The study underscores the significant impact of servant leadership and its dimensions on organizational citizenship behavior.
6. Teachers in private schools within the Soran independent administration perceive their principals as servant leaders due to their practice of accountability, empowerment, humility, stewardship, and standing back.
7. Teachers' perceptions of servant leadership differ by gender and employment type, except in Accountability and Standing Back, highlighting the impact of personal and job-related factors.

RECOMMENDATION

These important recommendations cover different aspects relevant to private schools in Soran independent administration in KRG. They offer practical insights and guidance for addressing key issues and improving results. Below, a more detailed explanation of each recommendation's significance and potential impact is provided.

1. Given the lower participation of males compared to females, promoting gender diversity and inclusion in private schools within the Soran independent administration is essential. This can be achieved by encouraging men to join the profession, for example, by offering competitive salaries that meet both family and personal needs.
2. To address the high proportion of young teachers, it is recommended that policies be developed to balance recruitment by considering both young and experienced educators. This can help improve teaching quality while also addressing the financial constraints that currently lead private schools to favour younger, less experienced staff.
3. It is recommended that private schools increase the proportion of permanent staff, alongside full-time contractual employment, to benefit from teachers' experience, ensure continuity, and enhance the overall stability and quality of education.
4. It is recommended that private schools adopt and strengthen servant leadership practices, as they significantly enhance organizational citizenship behaviour and promote a positive, collaborative school environment.
5. It is recommended that private school principals in the Soran Independent Administration continue to practice and strengthen accountability, empowerment, humility, stewardship, and standing back to reinforce their effectiveness as servant leaders.

6. Because participants' perceptions of school leadership differ by gender and employment type, private schools should adopt inclusive leadership practices that recognize and address these varying needs and expectations by fostering strong, supportive relationships with all staff and ensuring fairness to enhance trust, engagement, and positive perceptions of servant leadership.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could benefit from examining the role of various leadership styles beyond servant leadership on organizational citizenship behaviour, while also expanding the study to include public school teachers and other institutions within the Soran Independent Administration

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