

Servant Leadership and Teacher Performance in Islamic Educational Institutions: A Qualitative Case Study at MTsN Kota Binjai, Indonesia

Rizza Fikri Al-Faris¹, Inom Nasution¹, Yahfizham¹

¹Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia

Corresponding author e-mail: rizzafikri0332234033@uinsu.ac.id

Article History: Received on 8 July 2026, Revised on 12 August 2026,
Published on 12 August 2026

Abstract: The effectiveness of educational leadership is crucial for sustaining teacher performance, yet evidence on servant leadership in Islamic educational institutions remains limited. This study examines how a madrasah principal implements servant leadership to support teacher performance at MTsN Kota Binjai, Indonesia, including its supporting conditions, challenges, and resolution strategies. Using a descriptive qualitative case study, data were collected from 15 purposively selected participants through participatory observation, semi-structured interviews, and institutional documentation. The findings reveal four interconnected practices: altruistic calling through responsiveness to teachers' professional needs; community building through collaborative interaction; empowerment through delegation and professional autonomy; and persuasion through humanistic alignment with the madrasah vision. A familial organizational culture, transparent financial governance, and technology-adaptive younger teachers supported implementation. Key challenges included role disorientation among some senior teachers, possible misinterpretation of humanistic leadership as disciplinary leniency, bureaucratic constraints, and limited time for individualized interaction. The principal addressed these challenges through cross-generational peer mentoring, informal communication forums, tactical funding, and progressive discipline combining counseling with accountability. The study shows that servant leadership is most sustainable when empowerment is balanced with structured support, transparent resource management, and clear professional boundaries.

Keywords: Educational Leadership, Islamic Educational Institutions, Servant Leadership, Teacher Performance

A. Introduction

Teacher performance is shaped not only by individual competence but also by the organizational conditions in which teachers work. Leadership is particularly important because principals influence access to professional support, the quality of communication, participation in decision-making, resource allocation, and the motivational climate of schools. Recent evidence from Indonesian educational settings similarly shows that principal leadership and management practices are

closely associated with teacher motivation and performance. In Islamic educational institutions, this leadership task is especially complex because principals are expected to coordinate professional accountability, bureaucratic requirements, collaborative relationships, and moral values at the same time (Karim et al., 2025).

Servant leadership offers a relevant conceptual lens for examining these demands because it places follower development, service, empowerment, stewardship, and relational influence at the center of leadership practice (Demeke et al., 2024). Contemporary scholarship has moved beyond treating servant leadership as a single benevolent trait and instead conceptualizes it as a multidimensional and context-dependent form of leadership. Recent reviews also show rapid growth of servant-leadership research in education while noting persistent conceptual fragmentation and the need for stronger context-sensitive explanations of how leadership practices generate teacher outcomes.

Empirical research has linked servant leadership with a range of teacher outcomes, including job satisfaction, emotional well-being, psychological resources, work engagement, resilience, innovation, and organizational citizenship behavior. Evidence from Greece, the United Arab Emirates, South Africa, and other educational contexts shows that service-oriented leadership can support collaborative school functioning and teacher motivation. However, the strength and mechanism of these relationships vary across settings. Other studies highlight relationships with teacher emotional well-being, stress, psychological capital, and life satisfaction (Bertieaux et al., 2024).

Research on performance and innovative behavior provides a similarly nuanced picture. Servant leadership has been associated with innovative work behavior and teacher performance through mechanisms such as autonomy, participation, motivation, commitment, and supportive work environments. However, not all studies report a uniform direct performance effect. Research with vocational-school teachers in Jember, for example, shows that the relationship can operate through work engagement, job satisfaction, and motivation rather than through a simple direct pathway. This variation cautions against assuming that servant leadership automatically produces higher performance in every context (Adiguzel et al., 2020).

The cultural and religious setting also matters (Gede Agung et al., 2024). In Bangladesh, religious values were found to interact with servant leadership in explaining teacher job satisfaction, demonstrating that service-oriented leadership can take on specific meanings within Muslim-majority educational environments. Indonesian studies likewise point to the relevance of servant leadership for teacher character, school climate, supervision, and performance, while emphasizing organizational culture and relational practices as important contextual conditions. These findings are important for madrasahs, where leadership is embedded

simultaneously in formal state governance and a value-laden educational community.

Despite growing scholarship, three gaps remain. First, recent systematic and scoping reviews identify a predominance of cross-sectional and outcome-oriented studies, leaving limited qualitative explanation of how servant leadership is enacted in everyday educational management. Second, servant leadership is often studied as an unambiguously positive predictor, even though causal claims require stronger designs and contextual contingencies can modify its effects. Third, relatively little attention has been paid to the practical tensions that emerge when empowerment meets different levels of teacher readiness, when humanistic leadership must coexist with discipline, or when responsive service is constrained by public-sector bureaucracy. These tensions are particularly salient in state Islamic schools (Malik, 2024).

Accordingly, this study uses servant leadership as an interpretive framework rather than as a predetermined causal model. The field evidence is examined through four leadership practices that emerged prominently in the case: altruistic calling, community building, empowerment, and persuasion/conceptualization. These practices are interpreted in relation to trust, professional autonomy, collaborative climate, and shared purpose, while remaining attentive to the institutional conditions that enable or limit them (Gottlieb et al., 2021; Salo et al., 2024). This approach is consistent with recent work emphasizing psychological safety, healthy work relationships, caring leadership, and context-sensitive adaptation rather than leader behavior in isolation.

This study therefore aims to analyze the implementation of servant leadership by the madrasah principal in supporting teacher performance at MTsN Kota Binjai. Specifically, it addresses four research questions: (1) How does the madrasah principal implement servant leadership to support teacher performance at MTsN Kota Binjai? (2) What factors support the implementation of servant leadership at MTsN Kota Binjai? (3) What challenges are encountered in implementing servant leadership at MTsN Kota Binjai? and (4) What strategies does the madrasah principal employ to address those challenges?

B. Methods

Research Design and Setting

This study employed a descriptive qualitative case-study approach to examine servant leadership as it occurred naturally at MTsN Kota Binjai, a state Islamic junior secondary school in Binjai, Indonesia. A qualitative design was appropriate because the research questions concern leadership practices, interactions, meanings, enabling conditions, and implementation challenges rather than the statistical estimation of

causal effects. The study followed four broad stages already embedded in the research process: preparation and instrument development, field data collection, concurrent organization and analysis of evidence, and conclusion drawing and report preparation (Bullock et al., 2021).

Participants and Sampling

Fifteen participants were selected purposively because they occupied different positions in the leadership-performance relationship: one madrasah principal, eight teachers with a minimum of three years of teaching experience, and six active students. The principal represented the policy and leadership perspective; teachers provided evidence about professional support, autonomy, communication, discipline, and work practices; and students were included as classroom-level recipients of teachers' instructional performance, thereby providing an additional perspective for source triangulation. The source dataset records participant roles and the minimum tenure criterion for teachers but does not provide a systematic age, gender, or other demographic profile (Ceci et al., 2023; K. Lee et al., 2022; Yusuf et al., 2024). These characteristics are therefore not reconstructed or inferred in this article.

Data Collection

Data were generated through three complementary techniques. First, participatory observation was conducted during a focused period of five working days to examine routine leadership interactions, teacher collaboration, communication patterns, and the organizational context in which leadership practices were enacted. The observation window was used as contextual verification rather than as the sole basis for the findings. Second, semi-structured in-depth interviews explored participants' experiences of the principal's leadership, professional support, autonomy, challenges, and responses to those challenges. Third, documentary evidence was examined from official madrasah records, including annual employee performance plans (RHK), class-supervision reports, and teacher-performance assessment results. The combination of interview, observation, and documentary evidence enabled claims to be compared across methods rather than derived from a single source (Busetto et al., 2020).

Data Analysis and Trustworthiness

Analysis followed the interactive qualitative model described in the source study: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. During reduction, evidence relevant to the research questions was selected and classified into provisional categories. Categories were compared across participant groups and data sources and then consolidated into higher-order themes concerning (a) servant-leadership implementation, (b) supporting factors, (c) challenges, and (d) resolution strategies.

Within the implementation theme, recurrent evidence was organized around altruistic calling, community building, empowerment, and persuasion/conceptualization. Data display involved constructing a source-triangulated narrative in which interpretations were checked against interview statements, observation evidence, and institutional documents. Conclusions were drawn iteratively by examining convergent and divergent evidence rather than by treating isolated statements as representative of the entire case (Polat, 2025; Willis & Harvey, 2025).

Trustworthiness was strengthened in three ways. Credibility was supported through method triangulation and source triangulation across the principal, teachers, students, observations, and documents. Confirmability was strengthened by anchoring central interpretations in identifiable participant quotations and documented institutional practices. Transferability is addressed through a clear description of the school type, participant roles, and implementation context, while recognizing that this remains a single-site case. Because the original field record does not document a formal member-checking protocol, intercoder agreement procedure, or reflexive journal, these procedures are not claimed here and their absence is recognized as a limitation (Dado et al., 2023).

Researcher Role and Reflexivity

In this qualitative design, the researchers functioned as the primary instruments for interviewing, observation, selection of relevant evidence, and interpretation. This creates a possibility that prior familiarity with servant-leadership concepts could shape interpretation. To reduce overinterpretation, the revised analysis distinguishes empirical results from theoretical discussion, uses cross-source comparison, and retains participant quotations as an evidentiary check. The absence of a formally documented reflexive journal limits the extent to which researcher positionality can be reconstructed retrospectively and should be considered when evaluating the study's confirmability (Wilson, 2025)(Salvador-Garcia et al., 2023).

C. Results and Discussion

1. Result

Theme 1: Implementation of Servant Leadership Dimensions

Triangulated field evidence indicates that servant leadership at MTsN Kota Binjai was enacted through four interconnected practices. Rather than appearing as a single leadership technique, these practices linked professional support, collaborative relationships, delegated responsibility, and shared direction to teachers' daily work (Keravnos et al., 2025; Sahlin, 2023).

Altruistic calling through professional support

The first pattern concerned responsiveness to teachers' professional needs. The principal supported technology-based learning and assessment by facilitating the procurement of a Computer Based Test (CBT) server when existing facilities were insufficient. Teachers interpreted this responsiveness as practical support for their work rather than as an administrative gesture. The leadership practice reduced a concrete instructional constraint and signaled that teacher professional needs were a legitimate organizational priority. In the case evidence, this behavior corresponds to altruistic calling because service was expressed through action directed at enabling teachers to perform their professional roles (Wightman et al., 2023).

Community building through collaborative interaction

The second pattern was the creation of a collaborative climate through direct presence, informal interaction, and humanistic communication. The principal did not rely exclusively on formal hierarchical meetings; routine contact in the madrasah environment created opportunities for teachers to communicate concerns and ideas in a less distant setting. Participants associated this accessibility with greater openness, participation, and a sense of shared responsibility for madrasah programs. Community building therefore functioned as a relational infrastructure for cooperation rather than merely as interpersonal friendliness (Bartel & Rockmann, 2024).

Empowerment through professional autonomy

The third pattern involved decentralization of authority. Teachers, individually and through the Subject Teacher Consultation Forum (MGMP), were given room to design learning activities, prepare evaluations, and manage programs without excessive intervention. This autonomy shifted part of the responsibility for innovation and implementation from the principal to teachers (Gavin & Stacey, 2023; Meyer et al., 2023; Salokangas et al., 2020). Participants described this arrangement as trust, but the later challenge data also show that the same autonomy was not experienced uniformly by all teachers. Empowerment was therefore productive when teachers had sufficient confidence and support to use the delegated authority.

Persuasion and conceptualization through shared vision

The fourth pattern concerned alignment around the madrasah's direction. The principal communicated program priorities through explanation and persuasion rather than relying only on coercive instructions. Teachers were encouraged to understand programs as shared responsibilities connected to collective goals. The evidence suggests that this approach supported commitment by giving teachers a

rationale for action and by linking professional tasks to the broader purpose of the institution (Leijen et al., 2020).

Theme 2: Supporting Factors

Three conditions supported the implementation of servant leadership. First, the madrasah already had strong familial ties and solidarity among educators. Mutual support, openness, and cooperation reduced the social distance between the principal and teachers and provided a cultural foundation for community building. Second, participants emphasized transparent management of BOS and committee funds. Financial openness strengthened institutional trust and allowed leadership decisions concerning learning facilities to be understood as accountable responses to collective needs. Third, the presence of younger teachers who were comfortable with technology created an important source of innovation and peer support (Davies et al., 2024; Santagata et al., 2024).

"Many young teachers here are technologically capable. Because the leadership is open and not overly bureaucratic, they feel they have room to express fresh ideas." (Subject Teacher, May 16, 2026).

The quote illustrates the interaction between leadership style and workforce composition. The supportive condition was not simply that younger teachers possessed digital skills; it was that the leadership environment gave those skills organizational space. At the same time, this demographic difference became relevant to the challenges because senior teachers did not always respond to autonomy and technological change in the same way (Al-khresheh, 2024).

Theme 3: Challenges and Resolution Strategies

The implementation process revealed four related tensions: uneven readiness for autonomy, ambiguity between humanistic treatment and disciplinary leniency, bureaucratic constraints on rapid support, and limited time for individualized interaction. The principal's responses show that servant leadership in this case required adaptive managerial mechanisms rather than service and empathy alone (Schowalter & Volmer, 2024).

Uneven readiness for autonomy and cross-generational peer mentoring

Some senior teachers had worked for long periods within more instructional and hierarchical leadership patterns. When the principal delegated greater autonomy, this could create role disorientation rather than immediate empowerment (Pegan, 2022).

"We were used to being told what to do. Now, when we are asked to create an innovation, some of us can feel confused about where to begin." (Senior Teacher, May 14, 2026).

The principal responded by facilitating cross-generational peer mentoring in MGMP activities. Senior teachers contributed subject knowledge and classroom-management experience, while younger teachers assisted with digital tools and learning media. A senior teacher described the arrangement as less threatening because support came from colleagues rather than through public correction by the principal. This strategy converted demographic differences from a source of resistance into a reciprocal learning resource (Czerniewicz et al., 2020).

Humanistic leadership, disciplinary boundaries, and progressive counseling

A second tension emerged when a small number of teachers interpreted the avoidance of harsh public reprimands as managerial leniency. The principal acknowledged that changing discipline from fear-based compliance to self-regulation required time.

"Sometimes a few teachers interpret freedom and kindness as leniency in discipline. Moving from discipline based on fear to discipline based on self-awareness is a long process." (Head of the Madrasah, May 12, 2026).

To address this problem, the principal used progressive discipline (Toropova et al., 2021). Initial problems were handled through private dialogue and reflection; repeated problems led to clearer verbal commitments and, when necessary, involvement of the deputy head or personnel supervisor. The strategy preserved personal dignity while making professional consequences progressively explicit. The Deputy Head of Curriculum reported that personal reprimands could improve discipline without humiliating teachers publicly (Interview, May 17, 2026).

Bureaucratic constraints, time limitations, and collective communication

A third challenge involved the tension between rapid, service-oriented responses and public-sector budget rules (Kussl, 2025; Santilli & Scaramuzzino, 2026). The Deputy Head of the Madrasah explained that some teacher innovations had to be postponed because BOS funds could not always be disbursed for the proposed need within the applicable rules (Interview, May 13, 2026). In addition, individualized heart-to-heart communication was difficult to scale because the principal also carried external and managerial responsibilities. A subject teacher noted that personal discussions could require waiting time when many teachers sought access to the principal (Interview, May 16, 2026).

The response was to institutionalize informal collective communication after morning exercise activities, allowing multiple teachers to raise ideas and concerns

without relying on individual office appointments. For urgent needs, the leadership also used committee funding where appropriate and transparently communicated with the committee and parents, including for facilities such as the CBT server. These mechanisms did not eliminate bureaucracy, but they increased the madrasah's capacity to respond without abandoning formal accountability (Millie, 2025).

2. Discussion

Theoretical Integration

The findings support a multidimensional understanding of servant leadership. Altruistic calling, community building, empowerment, and persuasion/conceptualization were not isolated leader traits; they formed an interdependent sequence in which service addressed concrete professional needs, relationships created trust, autonomy transferred responsibility, and persuasive vision linked individual initiative to institutional purpose. This pattern is compatible with contemporary work that treats servant leadership as a hierarchical and multidimensional construct rather than a generic orientation toward kindness. It also aligns with systematic reviews showing that teacher outcomes arise through multiple psychological, behavioral, and organizational mechanisms rather than through a single direct leadership effect (Rajâa & Mekkaoui, 2025).

The case adds an important qualification to the empowerment component (Kong et al., 2022). Delegating authority did not automatically create agency for every teacher. For some senior educators, autonomy initially produced uncertainty because previous work routines had rewarded compliance with explicit instruction. This finding extends research that connects servant leadership with psychological resources and organizational citizenship behavior by showing that empowerment may require scaffolding when follower readiness is uneven. Cross-generational peer mentoring served as that scaffold: it preserved autonomy while lowering the practical and psychological cost of learning new technologies.

The familial culture and financial transparency found in this study also demonstrate that servant leadership depends on organizational conditions. Healthy work relationships, community value, and psychological safety have been identified as important mechanisms in other contexts, while caring and place-sensitive leadership has been shown to strengthen relational trust during institutional disruption (Knight-Abowitz, 2025). The present case suggests that stewardship has a particularly concrete meaning in a public madrasah: transparent resource management can strengthen leadership legitimacy because teachers can see how organizational funds are connected to shared instructional needs.

Comparison with Prior Research

The findings broadly converge with international evidence linking servant leadership to teacher motivation, satisfaction, well-being, resilience, and collaborative climates. They also correspond with research associating service-oriented leadership with innovation and teacher performance through participation and supportive organizational conditions. However, the present qualitative evidence does not establish that servant leadership caused an increase in teacher performance (Makirimani & Naicker, 2024). This distinction is important because recent methodological work warns that many servant-leadership studies are vulnerable to endogeneity and overly strong causal inference. The more defensible interpretation is that participants experienced servant-leadership practices as conditions that supported motivation, responsibility, collaboration, and professional work.

The Islamic educational context further differentiates the case. Research in Bangladesh shows that religious values can reinforce the meaning of servant leadership and teacher satisfaction, while Indonesian studies have connected service-oriented leadership with teacher character, supervision, performance, and school culture. The MTsN Kota Binjai findings add a state-bureaucratic dimension: values of service and familial care were embedded within formal public finance rules and accountability structures. Servant leadership therefore operated as negotiated practice between relational values and administrative constraints rather than as a leadership model detached from institutional regulation (McGhee, 2023).

The presence of technology-adaptive younger teachers is also consistent with scholarship on changing educator expectations and innovation. Studies of contemporary educational leadership indicate that supportive, participatory leadership can create conditions in which teachers contribute ideas and adopt new practices. Yet the case cautions against generational stereotyping. The relevant mechanism was not age itself but differential familiarity with technology and autonomy. Peer mentoring was effective because it combined the expertise of senior teachers with the digital fluency of younger colleagues, turning complementary capabilities into collective capacity. This interpretation is more precise than assuming that one generation is inherently more compatible with servant leadership (Lemoine et al., 2025).

Other recent work reinforces the importance of relational and affective mechanisms (Saleem et al., 2020). Teacher happiness, work relationships, and loyalty have all been associated with servant leadership in different organizational settings. Studies of teacher stress and exhaustion similarly suggest that supportive leadership can matter for well-being, while effects can vary depending on demands and context. These findings help explain why the principal's availability and private counseling were valued at MTsN Kota Binjai, but they also illuminate the scalability problem:

personalized leadership becomes difficult when the leader's time and organizational span are limited.

Resolution Strategies Analysis

The three resolution mechanisms identified in the case - peer mentoring, collective informal communication with tactical resource mobilization, and progressive discipline - show how servant leadership can be translated into managerial systems. Peer mentoring redistributed the burden of support from the principal to professional peers and is consistent with collaborative approaches to educator development. Informal forums transformed accessibility from an individual relationship into a collective routine, partially addressing the time limitation of principal-centered service. Progressive discipline clarified that humanistic leadership does not require permissiveness: dignity and accountability can coexist when correction is private, graduated, and linked to professional responsibility.

This adaptive interpretation also helps reconcile mixed findings in the literature (P. C. Lee et al., 2021). Studies have reported positive associations with performance, innovative behavior, motivation, and satisfaction, while systematic and scoping reviews emphasize contextual variation and incomplete knowledge of mechanisms. The MTsN Kota Binjai case suggests that the practical value of servant leadership depends less on unconditional leader benevolence than on the fit among service orientation, follower readiness, collaborative structures, resource transparency, and clear professional boundaries. This contextualized formulation is the study's main theoretical contribution.

D. Conclusions

This qualitative case study shows that servant leadership at MTsN Kota Binjai was enacted through four practices: altruistic calling through responsiveness to teachers' professional needs; community building through egalitarian and collaborative interaction; empowerment through delegated authority and professional autonomy; and persuasion and conceptualization through humanistic alignment around a shared institutional vision. Participants perceived these practices as supporting teacher responsibility, collaboration, motivation, and performance. A familial organizational culture, transparent financial governance, and technology-adaptive teachers strengthened their implementation. However, practical tensions remained. Some senior teachers experienced uncertainty when autonomy replaced top-down instruction, the humanistic approach was occasionally interpreted as disciplinary leniency, public budget regulations limited institutional support, and individualized communication was difficult to sustain across a demanding managerial workload. The principal addressed these challenges through cross-generational peer mentoring, informal communication forums, tactical funding, and progressive counseling that combined dignity with accountability. The practical implication is

that servant leadership should not be implemented as empathy without structure. Madrasah and school leaders should combine empowerment with mentoring, relational accessibility with scalable communication routines, transparent stewardship with regulatory compliance, and humane treatment with professional boundaries. The study also suggests that servant leadership is best understood as a contextually negotiated organizational practice whose outcomes depend on leader behavior, follower readiness, institutional culture, and bureaucratic conditions. These findings should be interpreted within several limitations. The study examined one state Islamic junior secondary school, observation covered only five working days, participant demographics beyond role and minimum teacher tenure were unavailable, and the field record did not document formal member checking, intercoder agreement, or a reflexive journal. Future studies should use multisite and longitudinal designs, document participant characteristics and researcher reflexivity systematically, compare madrasah and non-madrasah settings, and examine how follower readiness, bureaucracy, mentoring, and organizational scale shape servant leadership and teacher performance.

E. Acknowledgement

We sincerely thank the principal, teachers, students, and other members of MTsN Kota Binjai for their participation, openness, and assistance during data collection. Appreciation is also extended to Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan for its academic environment. We are grateful to the editorial team and anonymous reviewers of the *Journal of Social Work and Science Education* for constructive comments that strengthened the clarity and quality of this manuscript.

References

- Adiguzel, Z., Ozcinar, M. F., & Karadal, H. (2020). Does servant leadership moderate the link between strategic human resource management on rule breaking and job satisfaction? *European Research on Management and Business Economics*, 26(2), 103–110. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iedeen.2020.04.002>
- Al-khresheh, M. H. (2024). Bridging technology and pedagogy from a global lens: Teachers' perspectives on integrating ChatGPT in English language teaching. *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence*, 6(March), 100218. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeai.2024.100218>
- Bartel, C. A., & Rockmann, K. (2024). The disease of indifference: How relational systems provide the attentional infrastructure for organizational resilience. *Strategic Organization*, 22(1), 18–48. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14761270231183441>
- Bertieaux, D., Hesbois, M., Goyette, N., & Duroisin, N. (2024). Psychological capital and well-being: An opportunity for teachers' well-being? Scoping review of the scientific literature in psychology and educational sciences. *Acta Psychologica*, 248(June), 104370. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2024.104370>
- Bullock, H. L., Lavis, J. N., Wilson, M. G., Mulvale, G., & Miatello, A. (2021).

- Understanding the implementation of evidence-informed policies and practices from a policy perspective: a critical interpretive synthesis. *Implementation Science*, 16(1), 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13012-021-01082-7>
- Busetto, L., Wick, W., & Gumbinger, C. (2020). How to use and assess qualitative research methods. *Neurological Research and Practice*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s42466-020-00059-z>
- Ceci, S. J., Kahn, S., & Williams, W. M. (2023). Exploring Gender Bias in Six Key Domains of Academic Science: An Adversarial Collaboration. In *Psychological Science in the Public Interest* (Vol. 24, Number 1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/15291006231163179>
- Czerniewicz, L., Agherdien, N., Badenhorst, J., Belluigi, D., Chambers, T., Chili, M., de Villiers, M., Felix, A., Gachago, D., Gokhale, C., Ivala, E., Kramm, N., Madiba, M., Mistri, G., Mqgwashu, E., Pallitt, N., Prinsloo, P., Solomon, K., Strydom, S., ... Wissing, G. (2020). A Wake-Up Call: Equity, Inequality and Covid-19 Emergency Remote Teaching and Learning. *Postdigital Science and Education*, 2(3), 946–967. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42438-020-00187-4>
- Dado, M., Spence, J. R., & Elliot, J. (2023). The Case of Contradictions: How Prolonged Engagement, Reflexive Journaling, and Observations can Contradict Qualitative Methods. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 22, 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069231189372>
- Davies, S., Seitamaa-Hakkarainen, P., & Hakkarainen, K. (2024). Knowledge creation through maker practices and the role of teacher and peer support in collaborative invention projects. *International Journal of Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning*, 19(3), 283–310. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11412-024-09427-2>
- Demeke, G. W., van Engen, M. L., & Markos, S. (2024). Servant Leadership in the Healthcare Literature: A Systematic Review. *Journal of Healthcare Leadership*, 16, 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.2147/JHL.S440160>
- Gavin, M., & Stacey, M. (2023). Enacting autonomy reform in schools: The reshaping of roles and relationships under Local Schools, Local Decisions. *Journal of Educational Change*, 24(3), 501–523. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-022-09455-5>
- Gede Agung, D. A., Nasih, A. M., Sumarmi, Idris, & Kurniawan, B. (2024). Local wisdom as a model of interfaith communication in creating religious harmony in Indonesia. *Social Sciences and Humanities Open*, 9(February), 100827. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2024.100827>
- Gottlieb, L. N., Gottlieb, B., & Bitzas, V. (2021). Creating empowering conditions for nurses with workplace autonomy and agency: How healthcare leaders could be guided by strengths-based nursing and healthcare leadership (SBNH-I). *Journal of Healthcare Leadership*, 13, 169–181. <https://doi.org/10.2147/JHL.S221141>
- Karim, A., Fathurohman, O., Sulaiman, S., Marliani, L., Muhammadun, M., & Firmansyah, B. (2025). How do principals act as leaders and managers in boarding and public schools in Indonesia? *Cogent Education*, 12(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2024.2445354>

- Keravnos, N., Lipsou, E., & Pavlakis, M. (2025). Building high faculty trust through leadership integration in Cypriot primary schools: The role of transformational, instructional and distributed styles. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17411432251398349>
- Knight-Abowitz, K. (2025). Serving on a School Board, 2019-2023: Strengths and Vulnerabilities of a Democratic Institution. *AERA Open*, 11(1), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23328584251323899>
- Kong, S. C., Cheung, W. M. Y., & Zhang, G. (2022). Evaluating artificial intelligence literacy courses for fostering conceptual learning, literacy and empowerment in university students: Refocusing to conceptual building. *Computers in Human Behavior Reports*, 7(November 2021), 100223. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chbr.2022.100223>
- Kussl, S. (2025). Identity and Adaptation: The Evolving Role of Public Sector Professionals in the Digital Transformation of Road Transportation. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 49(12), 816-835. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2025.2542310>
- Lee, K., Fanguy, M., Bligh, B., & Lu, X. S. (2022). Adoption of online teaching during the COVID-19 Pandemic: a systematic analysis of changes in university teaching activity. *Educational Review*, 74(3), 460-483. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2021.1978401>
- Lee, P. C., Xu, S. (Tracy), & Yang, W. (2021). Is career adaptability a double-edged sword? The impact of work social support and career adaptability on turnover intentions during the COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 94(January), 102875. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2021.102875>
- Leijen, Ä., Pedaste, M., & Lepp, L. (2020). Teacher Agency Following the Ecological Model: How It Is Achieved and How It Could Be Strengthened By Different Types of Reflection. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 68(3), 295-310. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2019.1672855>
- Lemoine, G. J., Eva, N., Smallfield, J., Hartnell, C. A., & Meuser, J. D. (2025). Fortifying Servant Leadership's Foundations: Five Core Questions to Guide Future Research. In *Group and Organization Management* (Vol. 0, Number 0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/10596011251376461>
- Makirimani, R., & Naicker, S. R. (2024). The Potential for Servant Leadership to Raise Teacher Morale in Primary Schools: Perspectives from South Africa. *SAGE Open*, 14(4), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440241296634>
- Malik, A. (2024). New variants of ultra-conservative Islamic schools in Indonesia: A study on Islamic school endeavor with Islamic group movement. *Power and Education*, 16(1), 14-28. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17577438231163042>
- McGhee, P. (2023). The Management Practice of Servant Leadership: A Levinasian Enrichment. *Philosophy of Management*, 22(3), 321-346. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40926-022-00214-3>
- Meyer, A., Hartung-Beck, V., Gronostaj, A., Krüger, S., & Richter, D. (2023). Correction to: How can principal leadership practices promote teacher collaboration and organizational change? A longitudinal multiple case study of

- three school improvement initiatives (*Journal of Educational Change*, (2023), 24, 3, (425-455), 10.1007/s10. *Journal of Educational Change*, 24(3), 659-660. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-022-09454-6>
- Millie, J. (2025). Limits of bureaucratisation in Islamic education. *Religion, State and Society*, 53(3), 188-201. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09637494.2025.2560226>
- Pegan, A. (2022). A temporal perspective on staff support in the European parliament. *Journal of European Integration*, 44(4), 511-529. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2021.1942463>
- Polat, A. (2025). Thematic Analysis in Qualitative Research: Common Pitfalls and Practical Insights for Academic Writing. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 24, 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069251372835>
- Rajâa, O., & Mekkaoui, A. (2025). Revealing the impact of social exchange theory on financial performance: a systematic review of the mediating role of human resource performance. *Cogent Business and Management*, 12(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2025.2475983>
- Sahlin, S. (2023). Teachers Making Sense of Principals' Leadership in Collaboration Within and Beyond School. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 67(5), 754-774. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2022.2043429>
- Saleem, F., Zhang, Y. Z., Gopinath, C., & Adeel, A. (2020). Impact of Servant Leadership on Performance: The Mediating Role of Affective and Cognitive Trust. *SAGE Open*, 10(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019900562>
- Salo, P., Francisco, S., & Olin Almqvist, A. (2024). Understanding professional learning in and for practice. *Professional Development in Education*, 50(3), 444-459. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2024.2311108>
- Salokangas, M., Wermke, W., & Harvey, G. (2020). Teachers' autonomy deconstructed: Irish and Finnish teachers' perceptions of decision-making and control. *European Educational Research Journal*, 19(4), 329-350. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474904119868378>
- Salvador-Garcia, C., Chiva-Bartoll, O., Maravé-Vivas, M., & Gil-Gómez, J. (2023). Service-learning in physical education teacher education: A retrospective exploratory study to examine its challenges. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 135(September). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2023.104350>
- Santagata, R., Villavicencio, A., Wegemer, C. M., Cawelti, L., & Gatlin-Nash, B. (2024). "I have been pushed outside of my comfort zone and have grown as a result": Teacher professional learning and innovation during the pandemic. *Journal of Educational Change*, 25(4), 699-726. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-023-09491-9>
- Santilli, C., & Scaramuzzino, R. (2026). Between Policy-oriented Criticism and Structural Opposition – Civil Society Advocacy in the Age of Populism. *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, 39(2), 317-338. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10767-025-09510-y>
- Schowalter, A. F., & Volmer, J. (2024). Servant and Crisis Manager? The Association of Servant Leadership with Followers' Adaptivity and Proactivity. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*, 31(4), 433-452.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/15480518241287647>

- Toropova, A., Myrberg, E., & Johansson, S. (2021). Teacher job satisfaction: the importance of school working conditions and teacher characteristics. *Educational Review*, 73(1), 71-97. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2019.1705247>
- Wightman, S., Potts, G., & Beadle, R. (2023). 'Whose Call?' The Conflict Between Tradition-Based and Expressivist Accounts of Calling. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 183(4), 947-962. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-022-05067-4>
- Willis, R. K., & Harvey, S. (2025). Doing interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) in applied linguistics research: A field-specific guide. *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics*, 4(3). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rmal.2025.100279>
- Wilson, J. (2025). Interpretive Description and Reflexive Thematic Analysis: Exploring Conceptual Coherence and Methodological Integrity. *Qualitative Health Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10497323251378303>
- Yusuf, A., Pervin, N., & Román-González, M. (2024). Generative AI and the future of higher education: a threat to academic integrity or reformation? Evidence from multicultural perspectives. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 21(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-024-00453-6>