(REVIEW ARTICLE)

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Servant leadership in educational organizations in saudi arabia: a literature review

Saud G Albeshir *

Department of Educational Administration, King Saud University – Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate the current state of practicing servant leadership in educational organizations in Saudi Arabia through a literature review. The study established specific criteria for selecting literature to ensure the credibility of the research. A total of 28 peer-reviewed articles published in academic journals between 2016 and 2023 were selected for this review. These articles examined the practice of servant leadership in Saudi schools and universities. The study reached several conclusions: All published studies on servant leadership in Saudi educational institutions are quantitative and rely solely on questionnaires as the data collection tool. Most of the studies are descriptive, correlational, or analytical, with no qualitative studies utilizing interviews. Furthermore, the dimensions of servant leadership vary across the included studies, and it was observed that the researchers developed the questionnaires instead of relying on previously established ones. The first published study on servant leadership in Saudi educational institutions appeared in 2016. The study found that most research on servant leadership in Saudi educational institutions was conducted in public schools and colleges rather than private ones. Additionally, the study discovered that the degree of practicing servant leadership in Saudi schools and colleges is generally high. The study offered several recommendations.

Keywords: Servant leadership; Servant leadership theory; Practicing servant leadership; Leadership; Educational organizations

1. Introduction

Leadership plays a crucial role in the success of organizations. Many companies and institutions have achieved unprecedented success due to the presence of leaders with expertise, skills, and charisma, and the opposite is also true. Therefore, organizations are keen to select leaders with great care and to adopt leadership styles and philosophies that enhance organizational effectiveness. One such leadership principle that has proven effective is servant leadership, a long-standing and deeply rooted practice in ancient and modern societies. Religions, including Islam, also advocate it. However, servant leadership as a term and leadership approach was introduced by the American thinker Robert Greenleaf, born in 1904 in Terre Haute, Indiana, a city known for Indiana State University. In 1970, after extensive experience in leadership roles, teaching, and training in various organizations, Greenleaf published a book titled The Servant as Leader, a term uncommon since followers traditionally served the leader, not the other way around. Peter Northouse, a professor of leadership at Western Michigan University, noted that servant leadership remained a philosophical concept for 30 years until the early 21st century when researchers began conducting scientific studies on servant leadership and identifying precise dimensions and criteria. It eventually evolved into a leadership theory, practiced and tested in various organizations, including educational institutions (Greenleaf, 2002; Northouse, 2021).

* Corresponding author: Saud G Albeshir

Numerous Western studies have found that servant leadership positively affects various aspects related to schools and their stakeholders, including students, teachers, parents, and the community. Several studies across different countries have reported positive correlations between the degree of practicing servant leadership and outcomes such as academic achievement, motivation for both students and teachers, job satisfaction among teachers, and a decrease in bullying and behavioral issues (Black, 2008; Brewer, 2010; Herndon, 2007; Patterson). In the Arab world, many researchers have conducted scientific studies on the practice of servant leadership in schools. It is believed that the study titled Servant Leadership in Jordanian Schools as Perceived by Teachers and Principals: An Exploratory Study, conducted by three researchers from Jordan—Abu Tina, Khasawneh, and Tahaina—and published in the Journal of Educational and Psychological Sciences at the University of Bahrain in 2007, was the first peer-reviewed Arab study on servant leadership in general, and the first Arab study on the practice of servant leadership in Arab schools. Studies on the practice of servant leadership in Saudi schools were slightly delayed, with the first study being conducted by Dr. Abdullah Al-Tamim, a professor of educational administration at the Islamic University of Madinah. The study was published in 2016 in the Journal of Educational Sciences at Cairo University and was titled The Reality of Servant Leadership among High School Principals in Madinah from Teachers' Perspectives: A Field Study.

Researchers have differed in defining the dimensions or specific definitions of servant leadership. For example, Russell and Stone (2002) identified nine dimensions of servant leadership: vision, honesty, integrity, trust, service, modeling, pioneering, appreciating others, and empowerment. On the other hand, Patterson's (2003) model included seven dimensions of servant leadership: love, sacrifice, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service. There are several definitions of servant leadership, but they generally revolve around two main points: altruism and prioritizing followers' interests, while also considering the interests of the organization and society (Northouse, 2018; Al-Rajhi, 2021). Al-Tamim operationally defined *servant leadership* as: "The leader's selflessness, humility with others, empowering them, supporting them through various means and methods, and standing by them with courage to enhance their satisfaction, morale, self-confidence, and productivity, enabling them to deliver their assigned services and achieve desired goals" (2016, p. 260). Albeshir (2023) defined *servant leadership* as "A holistic leadership approach that engages subordinates, enabling them to maximize their potential and capabilities, offering them opportunities to develop their skills through empowerment, and prioritizing the interests of subordinates while considering the organization's interests" (2023). Al-Oufi (2022) defined *servant leadership* as "A leadership style that meets the needs of subordinates, cares for them, involves them in decision-making, and fosters mutual cooperation, which contributes to achieving organizational goals."

1.1. Study Issue and Objectives

This study examines the implementation of servant leadership dimensions in Saudi schools and universities by reviewing the scientific literature published in Arabic databases indexed in Dar Almandumah and Google Scholar from 1990 to 2023. Prior to 2014, no studies on servant leadership applied in Saudi Arabia were found. The first study on servant leadership in Saudi Arabia, titled "Job Satisfaction of Employees Under the Servant Leadership Theory: A Field Study on a Sample of Employees in Government Agencies in Riyadh," was conducted by researcher Atiyah Abdul Rahman. The first study focused on the practice of servant leadership in Saudi schools was conducted by Abdullah Al-Tamim in 2016.

1.2. Criteria for Study Selection

- The article must be a published scientific paper in a peer-reviewed and classified academic journal.
- The study's topic or title must focus on the practice of servant leadership in public and higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia.
- The study must have been published before the end of 2023.
- Twenty-eight studies met the above criteria, with 17 studies related to servant leadership in schools and 11 studies related to its practice in higher education institutions.

1.3. Study Questions

- What is the presence of practicing servant leadership in Saudi schools?
- What is the presence of practicing servant leadership in higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia?
- What is the extent of practicing servant leadership in Saudi schools?
- What is the extent of practicing servant leadership in Saudi universities?

Study Objectives

- To identify the published literature on servant leadership in Saudi educational institutions.

- To determine the extent of practicing servant leadership in public and higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia.
- To identify the methodologies used in the published literature on servant leadership in Saudi public and higher education institutions.
- To identify the servant leadership dimensions adopted by researchers in studies on the practice of servant leadership in Saudi Arabia.

2. Results

2.1. Servant leadership in Saudi schools

The researcher discovered 17 studies that matched the criteria used in this paper, one of which was a study on practicing servant leadership in Saudi schools.

1. Al-Tamim (2016) conducted a study titled "The Reality of Servant Leadership among High School Principals in Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah from Teachers' Perspectives: A Field Study." According to the researchers, this is the first study to examine the topic of servant leadership in schools within Saudi Arabia. The study aimed to explore the extent to which high school principals in Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah practice servant leadership across the following dimensions: support, empowerment, accountability, forgiveness, courage, trust, humility, and service provision. The researcher employed a descriptive survey method and utilized a questionnaire as the primary data collection tool. The study sample comprised 512 male teachers. Key findings revealed that high school principals in Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah demonstrate a high level of servant leadership. The study also found that principals scored highly on the following dimensions: support, forgiveness, service provision, accountability, humility, empowerment, and trust. However, the courage dimension was practiced at a moderate level, with the statement regarding sacrificing personal interests for the sake of others receiving the lowest score. The study identified statistically significant differences in the responses based on the academic qualifications of the participants; teachers holding a bachelor's degree perceived a higher level of servant leadership among principals compared to those with a master's degree or higher. No statistically significant effects were found related to years of experience or specialization. These positive correlations between servant leadership and organizational commitment, emotional intelligence, and job satisfaction offer hope for the future of educational leadership.

2. Ibn Talib (2018) conducted a study titled "The Contribution of Servant Leadership in Achieving Organizational Trust among High School Leaders in the Al-Houta Bani Tamim and Al-Harq Governorates from Teachers' Perspectives." The study aimed to measure the contribution of servant leadership through its three dimensions—empowerment, altruism, and humility—in achieving organizational trust, which encompasses trust in the organization's management, trust in colleagues, and trust in supervisors. The researcher used a descriptive survey method and a questionnaire for data collection, with a sample size of 115 teachers from eight boys' high schools. Key findings indicated that empowerment, a critical dimension of servant leadership, contributes to organizational trust among high school leaders at a moderate level, as perceived by teachers in the Al-Houta Bani Tamim and Al-Harq Governorates. The results also showed that altruism, an essential aspect of servant leadership, contributes moderately to organizational trust among high school leaders. Similarly, the humility dimension contributed to organizational trust at a moderate level. The researcher did not clarify whether the participants' educational qualifications influenced the variation in responses. These findings reassure us of the high level of servant leadership practice among high school leaders, instilling confidence in the educational system.

3. Al-Shaya and Al-Mutairi (2019) conducted a study titled "Emotional Intelligence and Its Relationship with Servant Leadership among School Leaders in Al-Mithnab Governorate from Female Teachers' Perspectives." The study employed a descriptive correlational method and used a questionnaire as the data collection tool. The sample consisted of 264 female teachers. The dimensions of servant leadership included in the study were altruism, emotional compatibility, wisdom, persuasive planning, and organizational management. Significant findings revealed that many school leaders practice servant leadership skills and emotional intelligence. The study also found a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and servant leadership among school leaders in Al-Mithnab Governorate from the teachers' perspectives. Additionally, the study indicated no statistically significant differences in responses regarding school leaders' practice of emotional intelligence based on participants' educational qualifications or years of experience. However, there were statistically significant differences in the practice of servant leadership related to the teaching level of the participating teachers.

4. Al-Moslit (2019) published a study titled "Servant Leadership among High School Leaders in Abha and Its Relationship with Organizational Commitment of Employees." The researcher used a descriptive correlational method and designed a questionnaire for data collection with a sample of 310 teachers. The servant leadership dimensions included in the study were conceptualization, job empowerment, staff development and success, emotional processing, and ethical behavior. The study found that the overall mean score for the practice of servant leadership among high school leaders in Abha was moderate. The researcher concluded that the culture of servant leadership is still below the desired level in high schools in Abha. The results also indicated a statistically significant positive correlation between the practice of servant leadership among high school leaders in Abha and the level of organizational commitment of the employees, as perceived by the teachers. The study did not specify if there were variations in the responses based on gender.

5. In 2019, researcher Manal Al-Humaidi conducted a study aiming to identify the extent to which high school leaders in Taif City practice servant leadership and its relationship with organizational citizenship among female teachers from their perspective. The researcher employed a descriptive survey method with a study sample of 347 female teachers. A questionnaire was used as the primary data collection tool. The study examined servant leadership across eight dimensions: empowerment, support, accountability, forgiveness, courage, trust, humility, and service provision. Key findings indicated that the practice of servant leadership among high school leaders in Taif City was at a high level. The researcher attributed this result to the leaders' awareness of the importance of this leadership style and its positive impact on the teachers' job performance. The study also found that all dimensions of servant leadership were practiced at a high level, except for the courage dimension, which was practiced at a moderate level. The researcher explained that the leaders' concern about following administrative rules and regulations might have limited their courage, leading to a more cautious approach. The study also found a moderate positive relationship between servant leadership and organizational citizenship. There were no statistically significant differences in the practice of servant leadership based on the educational qualifications or experience of the participants.

6. Al-Juhani (2019) examined the level of servant leadership practices among high school leaders from the perspective of female teachers in East Riyadh. The study employed a descriptive-analytical method and utilized a questionnaire for data collection, with a sample of 246 female teachers. The researcher focused on six dimensions of servant leadership: altruism, human relations, organizational responsibility, designing persuasive plans, personal values, and empowerment. The results revealed that the level of servant leadership practice among high school leaders was high. All servant leadership dimensions in the study were practiced at a high level by high school leaders in East Riyadh, except for the dimension of designing persuasive plans, which was practiced at a moderate level, according to the responses of the participating teachers. The researcher attributed these findings to the high academic and professional level of the high school leaders, which helped them understand the servant leadership model correctly, leading them to prioritize the interests of teachers over their own and to encourage teachers to achieve their professional goals and ambitions. The study did not clarify if there were differences in participants' responses based on educational qualifications and teaching experience.

7. Al-Otaibi (2020) conducted a study aimed at identifying the extent to which servant leadership is practiced in public schools in Al-Qouaiyah Governorate and the level of organizational commitment among teachers in the Al-Qouaiyah Education Department. The researcher used a descriptive correlational method and employed a questionnaire as the data collection tool, with a study sample of 718 male and female teachers. The study focused on the following dimensions of servant leadership: altruism, emotional and psychological processing, wisdom, persuasive abilities, and organizational management. The findings indicated that school leaders practice servant leadership to a significant degree across all five dimensions. The study also revealed a high level of organizational commitment among the teaching staff in Al-Qouaiyah schools. Additionally, the study found a strong positive correlation between servant leadership among educational leaders in Al-Qouaiyah and the level of organizational commitment among teachers, as perceived by the study sample. The study also found differences in the mean scores based on years of experience, with less experienced teachers providing higher ratings for both servant leadership practices and organizational commitment. Furthermore, the study found differences in mean responses based on gender, with the differences favoring female participants.

8. Al-Asimi (2020) published a study titled "The Degree of Servant Leadership and Its Relationship with Job Engagement among High School Teachers in Taif City from the Teachers' Perspective." The researcher used a descriptive correlational method and designed a questionnaire to collect data from the study sample, which included 191 male teachers. Al-Asimi employed four dimensions to measure the extent of servant leadership practice: personal characteristics, other-oriented characteristics, task-oriented characteristics, and process-oriented characteristics, across 41 statements. The results showed that the level of servant leadership practice among school leaders was high, with personal characteristics and other-oriented characteristics being highly practiced, while task-oriented and

process-oriented characteristics were moderately practiced. The researcher explained these findings by stating that school leaders in the study possess many personal traits of servant leadership, such as courage, altruism, honesty, humility, empathy, and goodwill towards teachers, and their relationships with teachers are based on trust, listening, care, and encouragement. However, the practice of task and process-oriented characteristics was moderate. The study also found that the level of job engagement among high school teachers was moderate. There was a statistically significant positive correlation between the degree of servant leadership practice and the level of job engagement. The study did not find statistically significant differences in the responses regarding the degree of servant leadership practice and job engagement based on specialization.

9. Al-Zahrani (2020) conducted a study aiming to understand the extent of servant leadership practices among primary school leaders in Jeddah Governorate and their relationship with teachers' organizational commitment. The study employed a descriptive correlational method, with a sample of 362 teachers selected through stratified random sampling. The researcher focused on eight dimensions of servant leadership: empowerment, support, accountability, forgiveness, courage, trust, humility, and service provision. The study found that the level of servant leadership practice among male primary school leaders was generally high, with the dimensions of support, service provision, accountability, empowerment, trust, and courage all practiced at a high level, except for the support dimension, which was practiced at a very high level. The results indicated that the level of servant leadership practice among the targeted school leaders was moderate for the dimension of trust is low for the dimension of forgiveness. The researcher attributed the high level of servant leadership practice to the cooperation and credibility in interactions between teaching and administrative staff in Jeddah primary schools. The study also found that the level of organizational commitment among primary school teachers in Jeddah Governorate was high. There was a positive correlation between the level of servant leadership practice and the level of organizational commitment among teachers. The study found statistically significant differences in responses related to the educational qualification variable, favoring those with a bachelor's degree, but no statistically significant differences related to specialization or years of experience.

10. Researcher Ilham Al-Rajhi (2021) conducted a study titled "Servant Leadership among Female School Leaders in Public Schools in Makkah." The study aimed to determine the extent to which high school female leaders practice servant leadership from the perspective of female teachers. The study employed a descriptive survey method and used a questionnaire as the data collection tool, with a sample of 481 female teachers. The researcher focused on seven dimensions of servant leadership: love, care for others, humility, altruism, vision, trust, service to others, and empowerment. The study found that the level of servant leadership practice among high school female leaders in Makkah City was high from the participants' perspectives. All seven dimensions of servant leadership included in the study were practiced at a high level. Al-Rajhi attributed these findings to the nature of Saudi society, especially in Makkah, which adheres to Islamic teachings that emphasize love for others, care for their affairs, humility, respect, trust, and service to others, as well as empowering them to succeed. The study did not find statistically significant differences in the mean responses of the study sample regarding the practice of servant leadership based on educational qualifications or years of experience.

11. Al-Suhaili (2021) published a study aiming to explore the role of servant leadership in achieving job satisfaction among female school staff in Hafr Al-Batin Governorate. The researcher used a descriptive correlational method and designed a 43-item questionnaire to collect data for answering the study questions. The sample size was 360 female teachers and administrators from Hafr Al-Batin schools. The researcher focused on six dimensions of servant leadership: ethical behavior, emotional processing, care for subordinates, conceptual skills, empowerment, and care for the local community. The study found that the dimensions of ethical behavior and emotional processing were practiced at a high level by female school leaders, while the dimensions of care for subordinates, conceptual skills, empowerment, and care for the local community were practiced at a moderate level. Overall, the practice of servant leadership among female school leaders was moderate. The study did not find statistically significant differences in the mean responses based on job title or whether the participants were teachers or administrators. Additionally, there were no statistically significant differences in responses based on the teaching stage (primary, intermediate, or secondary). However, there were differences based on the type of school, with the differences favoring public schools. The study also found that the level of job satisfaction was moderate among the study sample, and there was a statistically significant positive relationship between the practice of servant leadership and the level of job satisfaction among school staff.

12. Al-Thawab (2022) conducted a study aimed at exploring the reality of servant leadership practices among high school female leaders in Al-Khafji Governorate from the perspective of female teachers. The study employed a descriptive survey method and developed a 33-item questionnaire. The study focused on four dimensions of servant leadership: empowerment, accountability and transparency, personal characteristics, and service provision. The study sample comprised 131 female teachers. The study found that the level of servant leadership practice among high school female leaders in Al-Khafji Governorate was moderate. All four dimensions of servant leadership—empowerment,

personal characteristics, accountability and transparency, and service provision—were practiced at a moderate level. The researcher attributed these findings to the school leaders' adherence to the laws and regulations issued by the Ministry of Education and the lack of full awareness among school leaders of the importance of servant leadership and its role in developing educational and administrative work. The study found differences in the mean responses of the participants, favoring more experienced teachers.

13. Al-Faisal (2020) conducted a study aimed at identifying the level of servant leadership skills and the dimensions of wisdom among high school principals in the Hail Region and exploring the relationship between servant leadership skills and the dimensions of wisdom among school principals. The study employed a descriptive method and included a sample of 83 high school principals from the Hail Region. The researcher focused on six dimensions of servant leadership: emotional care skills, skills for valuing the local community, cognitive skills, empowerment skills, skills for helping subordinates grow and develop, and ethical behavior skills. The study found that high school principals possess a high level of servant leadership skills. The results also revealed that the study sample demonstrated a high level of wisdom. The study found a statistically significant positive relationship between servant leadership skills and the dimensions of wisdom among high school principals in Hail City. The researcher did not clarify if there were differences in the mean responses of participants based on gender.

14. Al-Oufi (2022) conducted a study aimed at understanding the role of servant leadership in public high schools in the Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah Region from the teachers' perspective. The researcher used a descriptive correlational method and designed a questionnaire for data collection, with a study sample of 123 teachers from public high schools in Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah. The study focused on five dimensions of servant leadership: conceptual skills, individual development and growth, empowerment, putting subordinates first, and human relations. The study found that the level of servant leadership practice among school leaders was high across all five dimensions. The study did not find statistically significant differences in the responses of participants based on educational qualifications or years of experience.

15. Al-Aqzam and Al-Adsani (2023) conducted a study aimed at identifying the requirements for implementing servant leadership among high school female leaders in Dammam City from the perspective of female leaders and teachers. The study employed a descriptive survey method with a sample of 341 female teachers and leaders. The study focused on five dimensions of servant leadership requirements: requirements for implementing the dimension of conceptual skills, requirements for implementing the dimension of helping subordinates succeed and grow, requirements for implementing the dimension of empowerment, and requirements for implementing the dimension of altruism. The results showed that the study sample agreed that the requirements for implementing servant leadership among high school female leaders in Dammam City were at a high level. The researchers attributed these findings to the participants' awareness of the importance of servant leadership skills among school leaders. The study did not find differences in the mean responses of participants based on job title or work experience.

16. Al-Hussoun (2023) conducted a study titled "The Degree of Practicing Servant Leadership Dimensions among Female Leaders of Public High Schools in Buraidah City from the Perspective of Female Teachers." The researcher used a descriptive survey method and developed a questionnaire for data collection. The study sample consisted of 64 female teachers. The researcher focused on eight dimensions of servant leadership: conceptualization, emotional healing, putting subordinates first, ethical behavior, empowerment, helping subordinates develop and succeed, and creating value for the community. The study found that the level of servant leadership dimensions among female leaders of girls' high schools in Buraidah City was high across all dimensions from the perspective of female teachers. The study did not find statistically significant differences in the mean responses of teachers based on experience or academic specialization.

17. Al-Ajrafi (2023) conducted a study aimed at understanding the extent to which servant leadership dimensions are practiced by school leaders in Al-Dawadmi Governorate. The researcher used a descriptive survey method and employed a questionnaire for data collection, with a study sample of 105 male and female high school teachers. The study focused on four dimensions of servant leadership: organizational management, empowerment, altruism, and acceptance of others. The results showed that the level of servant leadership practice among school leaders was moderate overall, with all four dimensions of servant leadership being practiced at a moderate level. The researcher attributed these findings to the need for greater awareness of servant leadership as a modern management style. The study also found statistically significant differences related to years of experience, with more experienced teachers showing higher evaluations for both the degree of servant leadership practice and organizational commitment among teachers in the Al-Dawadmi Education Department. Additionally, there were differences in mean responses based on gender, with the differences favoring female participants.

2.2. Servant leadership in Saudi higher education

The researcher found 11 studies that matched the criteria used in this paper, one of which was a study on practicing servant leadership in Saudi higher education institution .

Ali and Al-Qarni (2017) conducted a study aimed at examining the relationship between the practice of servant leadership by academic heads and supervisors at the University of Tabuk and the level of organizational commitment among faculty members. Servant leadership, a leadership philosophy that emphasizes the leader's duty to serve others, focuses on the growth and well-being of the people and communities to which they belong. The study employed a descriptive correlational methodology and involved 603 faculty participants. The study tool focused on five dimensions of servant leadership: empowerment, wisdom, putting subordinates first, commitment to others' growth, and organizational management. The results indicated that the academic heads and supervisors at the University of Tabuk practiced servant leadership to a high degree.

Al-Oudah (2018) conducted a study to develop a proposed model to enhance organizational loyalty among faculty members at Saudi universities in light of the dimensions of servant leadership. The researcher used a descriptive-analytical approach, with a sample of 887 faculty members from various Saudi universities. The study tool included five dimensions of servant leadership: administrative organization, altruism, empathy, empowerment, and community building. The results revealed that the practice of servant leadership in Saudi universities was moderate. These findings suggest that there is room for improvement in the implementation of servant leadership practices in Saudi universities, which could potentially enhance organizational loyalty among faculty members.

Al-Muqabila (2019) conducted a study to assess the extent to which academic leaders at Najran University practice servant leadership from the perspective of faculty members. The study involved 226 participants and utilized a descriptive-analytical methodology, with a questionnaire developed as the data collection tool. The questionnaire covered dimensions of servant leadership, including empowerment, communication, self-esteem, individual development, leadership, and delegation. The study found that the practice of servant leadership by academic leaders was moderate. However, it's important to note that the study did not explore the reasons behind the differences in the delegation dimension based on experience and academic rank, which could be a potential area for future research.

Al-Shammari (2019) conducted a study to discover the reality of servant leadership practices among department heads at the University of Hafr Al-Batin from the perspective of faculty members. The study employed a descriptive-analytical approach involving 131 participants. The study tool focused on three dimensions of servant leadership: conceptual skills, putting subordinates first, and empowerment. The study found that department heads practiced servant leadership to a high degree, with conceptual skills ranked highest, followed by empowerment and then putting subordinates first. Significant differences were found based on gender, favoring males.

Al-Ajmi (2019) conducted a study to identify the extent to which academic leaders at Dar Al-Uloom University in Riyadh practice servant leadership from the perspective of faculty members. The study involved 189 faculty members and employed a descriptive survey methodology. The results indicated that academic leaders practiced servant leadership to a high degree.

Al-Omari (2021) conducted a study to understand the impact of servant leadership in managing international students at Saudi universities and its role in enhancing Saudi Arabia's positive image from the perspective of international students. The study employed a descriptive analytical methodology involving 834 international students at King Saud University. The study found that the staff managing international students practiced servant leadership to a high degree, and the students were satisfied with the treatment they received. Additionally, the study found that staff did not discriminate between students based on nationality or cultural background.

Al-Qarni (2021) conducted a study to assess the level of servant leadership practiced by department heads at the University of Tabuk in light of Liden's servant leadership model from the perspective of employees. The study also aimed to identify the obstacles limiting the practice of servant leadership and proposed a model to improve leadership performance. The study employed a descriptive survey methodology involving 219 employees at the University of Tabuk. The results indicated that department heads practiced servant leadership moderately, with all dimensions of servant leadership (appreciation of others, shared leadership, team building, individual development, authenticity, and providing leadership) practiced at a moderate level. The study identified several challenges limiting the practice of servant leadership, including the need for more authority and clearer criteria for appointing department heads.

Abid et al. (2021) conducted a study to identify the role of servant leadership in achieving job engagement among female administrators at King Abdulaziz University. The study focused on dimensions such as empowerment, individual development, humility, reliability, acceptance by others, guidance, and service to others. Using a descriptive analytical methodology involving 66 participants, the study revealed that servant leadership practices were at a high level, inspiring and motivating the audience with the positive impact of servant leadership on job engagement.

Al-Shalash (2022) conducted a study to assess the availability of servant leadership among deans of public and private colleges in the Qassim region. Using a descriptive comparative methodology and involving 323 participants, the study found that servant leadership was practiced at a high level among deans. This finding reassures the audience and instills confidence in the leadership of educational institutions.

Al-Judaibi (2023) conducted a study to identify the requirements for developing academic leadership performance at King Abdulaziz University in light of servant leadership and Saudi Vision 2030 from the perspective of faculty members. The study employed a descriptive-analytical methodology and used a questionnaire as the data collection tool, involving 45 faculty participants. The results indicated that the requirements for developing academic leadership performance in light of servant leadership were high, with no significant differences based on demographic variables.

Al-Azzam (2023) conducted a study to understand the reality of servant leadership and its relationship with job satisfaction from the perspective of faculty members at the University of Hail. Using a descriptive-analytical methodology and involving a sample of 385 faculty members, the study found that the level of servant leadership at the University of Hail was moderate, according to the faculty members. This finding should make the audience feel proud and satisfied with their institution's leadership.

2.3. The extent of practicing servant leadership in Saudi schools

Table 1 Summary of the extent of practicing servant leadership in Saudi schools

Researcher and Year	Purpose of the Study	Degree of Practicing Servant Leadership
Al-Tamim (2016)	To explore the practice of servant leadership among high school principals in Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah.	High
Ibn Talib (2018)	To measure the contribution of servant leadership in achieving organizational trust among high school leaders.	Moderate
Al-Shaya and Al-Mutairi (2019)	To investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and servant leadership among school leaders in Al-Mithnab Governorate.	High
Al-Moslit (2019)	To examine the relationship between servant leadership and organizational commitment among high school leaders in Abha.	Moderate
Al-Humaidi (2019)	To identify the practice of servant leadership among high school leaders in Taif and its relationship with organizational citizenship.	High
Al-Juhani (2019)	To assess the level of servant leadership practices among high school leaders in East Riyadh.	High
Al-Otaibi (2020)	To identify the practice of servant leadership in public schools in Al-Qouaiyah Governorate.	High
Al-Asimi (2020)	To investigate the relationship between servant leadership and job engagement among high school teachers in Taif.	High
Al-Zahrani (2020)	To understand the practice of servant leadership among primary school leaders in Jeddah and its relationship with organizational commitment.	High
Al-Rajhi (2021)	To determine the practice of servant leadership among high school female leaders in Makkah.	High
Al-Suhaili (2021)	To explore the role of servant leadership in achieving job satisfaction among female school staff in Hafr Al-Batin.	Moderate

Al-Thawab (2022)	To explore the practice of servant leadership among high school female leaders in Al-Khafji.	Moderate
Al-Faisal (2020)	To identify the level of servant leadership skills and wisdom among high school principals in Hail.	High
Al-Oufi (2022)	To understand the role of servant leadership in public high schools in Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah.	High
Al-Aqzam and Al-Adsani (2023)	To identify the requirements for implementing servant leadership among high school female leaders in Dammam.	High
Al-Hussoun (2023)	To assess the practice of servant leadership among female leaders of public high schools in Buraidah.	High
Al-Ajrafi (2023)	To understand the extent to which servant leadership dimensions are practiced by school leaders in Al-Dawadmi.	Moderate

2.4. The extent of practicing servant leadership in Saudi higher education institution

Table 2 Summary of the extent of practicing servant leadership in Saudi universities

Researcher & Year	Purpose of the Study	Degree of Practicing Servant Leadership
Ali and Al-Qarni (2017)	Examining the relationship between servant leadership by academic heads and organizational commitment at the University of Tabuk.	High
Al-Oudah (2018)	Developing a proposed model to enhance organizational loyalty among faculty members at Saudi universities based on servant leadership dimensions.	Moderate
Al-Muqabila (2019)	Assessing the extent to which academic leaders at Najran University practice servant leadership from the perspective of faculty members.	Moderate
Al-Shammari (2019)	Discovering the reality of servant leadership practices among department heads at the University of Hafr Al-Batin from the perspective of faculty members.	High
Al-Ajmi (2019)	Identifying the extent to which academic leaders at Dar Al-Uloom University in Riyadh practice servant leadership from the perspective of faculty members.	High
Al-Omari (2021)	Understanding the impact of servant leadership in managing international students at Saudi universities and its role in enhancing Saudi Arabia's positive image.	High
Al-Qarni (2021)	Assessing the level of servant leadership practiced by department heads at the University of Tabuk and identifying obstacles limiting its practice.	Moderate
Abid et al. (2021)	Identifying the role of servant leadership in achieving job engagement among female administrators at King Abdulaziz University.	High
Al-Shalash (2022)	Assessing the availability of servant leadership among deans of public and private colleges in the Qassim region from the perspective of faculty members.	High
Al-Judaibi (2023)	Identifying the requirements for developing academic leadership performance at King Abdulaziz University in light of servant leadership and Saudi Vision 2030.	High

Al-Azzam (2023)	Understanding the reality of servant leadership and its relationship with job satisfaction from the perspective of faculty members at the University of Hail.	Moderate

3. Discussion

Following a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the studies, the research reached the following conclusions:

- The first peer-reviewed scientific article on the topic of servant leadership in Saudi educational institutions was published in 2016, focusing on the practice of servant leadership in schools.
- The first peer-reviewed scientific article on servant leadership in Saudi higher education institutions was published in 2017.
- All studies identified by the researcher were published in Arabic.
- All studies on servant leadership were quantitative, with the majority employing descriptive correlational or descriptive analytical methodologies.
- All the studies included in this review shared a common research approach, relying exclusively on questionnaires as the sole data collection tool, with these questionnaires being developed by the researchers themselves.
- There is considerable variation in the dimensions of servant leadership across the studies.
- It is noteworthy that there is generally a high level of practicing servant leadership in Saudi schools, with more than 12 out of 17 studies concluding that servant leadership was practiced at a high level. Similarly, in higher education institutions, 7 out of 11 studies found a high level of practice. Similarly, there is a generally high level of practicing servant leadership in Saudi higher education institutions, with 7 out of 11 studies finding that servant leadership was practiced at a high level, while the other four studies reported a moderate level of practice.
- Overall, the practice of servant leadership in Saudi educational organizations is not just prevalent, but generally high, indicating a positive state of leadership in these institutions.

Recommendations

- It is essential to focus on servant leadership practices in educational organizations as they positively affect various aspects, including achievement, job satisfaction, and motivation.
- A specialized research center for servant leadership should be established in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to support and promote research in this area and encourage its implementation.
- Qualitative studies based on interviews and observations in the field of servant leadership should be conducted.
- Literature reviews should be conducted on the practice of servant leadership in Arab schools and Saudi and Arab higher education institutions.

4. Conclusion

This study examined the current state of servant leadership in schools and higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia through a literature review. The researcher carefully analyzed 28 peer-reviewed journal articles and discovered that the majority of scientific publications on servant leadership practice in educational organizations in Saudi Arabia were high both in schools and higher education. The study's findings are valuable for researchers interested in servant leadership in Saudi organizations as it provides the results of numerous scientific studies. Additionally, the study presented essential recommendations for future research on servant leadership in Saudi educational organizations.

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