

Servant Leadership Climate and Teacher Work Engagement in Faith-Based Basic Education Institutions

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated how a shared servant leadership climate related to teacher work engagement in faith-based basic education institutions in Quezon City. A cross-sectional multilevel explanatory design was used to account for teachers being nested within schools. Data were gathered through validated measures of servant leadership climate and work engagement, with the adapted instrument demonstrating strong content validity and high internal consistency. Multilevel confirmatory factor analysis supported the proposed structure of the constructs, while within-group agreement and intraclass correlation coefficients justified the aggregation of leadership ratings at the institutional level. Findings showed that servant leadership climate was generally favorable, with stewardship,

humility, interpersonal acceptance, and authenticity receiving the strongest ratings. Courage, accountability, and empowerment emerged as comparatively weaker dimensions. Teacher work engagement was also favorable, with dedication obtaining the highest level, followed by vigor, while absorption was only moderate. Multilevel structural equation modeling revealed that servant leadership climate had a significant positive relationship with overall teacher work engagement and with each of its dimensions. The strongest association was found with dedication, while the weakest was observed with absorption. Servant leadership climate explained a substantial portion of the between-school variation in work engagement. The results indicated that faith-based schools could strengthen teacher engagement by combining service-oriented leadership with firmer accountability, meaningful empowerment, fair workload practices, and protected time for instructional preparation. Leadership development should therefore promote care, stewardship, courage, and shared responsibility as interconnected features of mission-centered school administration.

Keywords: *accountability, faith-based education, servant leadership climate, stewardship, teacher dedication, work engagement*

INTRODUCTION

Reading allows learners to gain information, follow classroom instructions, express ideas, and Teachers carry the daily work through which the aims of an educational institution become visible. They prepare lessons, respond to the needs of learners, assess progress, communicate with families, and contribute to the life of the school beyond the classroom. The quality of their work is affected not only by their professional knowledge but also by the conditions in which they teach. Heavy responsibilities, administrative demands, limited resources, and insufficient recognition can weaken teachers' satisfaction and willingness to remain in the profession. International evidence has shown that teachers' well-being, working conditions, professional relationships, and experiences of

school leadership are closely connected with how they view their work and their profession (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2020).

Work engagement offers a useful way of understanding how teachers relate to their responsibilities. It goes beyond attendance, compliance, or the completion of assigned tasks. Engaged employees approach their work with energy, dedication, and sustained concentration. They are willing to invest effort, remain involved when difficulties arise, and find personal meaning in what they do. Work engagement may differ from one person to another and may also change according to working conditions, personal resources, and daily experiences. This means that teacher engagement cannot be treated as a fixed personal quality because it can be strengthened or weakened by the environment created within the school (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018).

The leadership provided by school administrators is one of the conditions that may shape teachers' engagement. Teachers are more likely to invest themselves in their work when they feel respected, trusted, supported, and included in matters that affect their professional responsibilities. Leadership may influence engagement through the culture established in the school, the opportunities given to teachers, and the meaning attached to their work. A study involving elementary school teachers found that school leadership affected work engagement through school culture, psychological empowerment, and job characteristics. The finding suggests that the influence of a school leader is often felt through the working relationships and professional conditions experienced by teachers each day (Zahed-Babelan et al., 2019).

Servant leadership provides a leadership approach that is closely tied to care, ethical conduct, personal growth, and service to others. Rather than placing the authority or interests of the leader at the center, servant leadership gives priority to the needs, development, and well-being of followers. Leaders following this approach listen to their people, provide support, share responsibility, encourage growth, and use authority with a clear sense of moral accountability. A systematic review of 285 studies described servant leadership as a distinct leadership approach and showed that its effects may be understood through the relationships leaders build with followers and the conditions they create within their organizations (Eva et al., 2019).

When servant leadership practices are consistently demonstrated, teachers may begin to see service, trust, humility, fairness, and concern for others as normal features of their workplace. These shared perceptions form what may be described as a servant leadership climate. Such a climate is not created by an occasional act of kindness or a single leadership program. It develops when school leaders regularly place people before personal recognition, respond to teachers' needs, support professional growth, and make decisions in ways that protect human dignity. Evidence from a broad meta-analysis showed that servant leadership contributed information beyond transformational, authentic, and ethical leadership when explaining employee attitudes and behaviors. It was also associated with favorable individual, team, and organizational outcomes (Lee et al., 2020).

Research conducted in educational institutions also points to a connection between servant leadership and work engagement. Among academic personnel, servant leadership was linked with engagement through intrinsic motivation, psychological ownership, and person-job fit. This finding indicates that employees may become more engaged when leadership helps them feel that their work is personally meaningful, that they belong to the institution, and that their abilities are suited to their responsibilities. Although the study was conducted in higher education, it provides a useful explanation of how service-oriented leadership may affect the psychological conditions that encourage educators to invest themselves fully in their work (Aboramadan et al., 2020).

Evidence from basic and secondary education has produced a similar pattern. A study involving permanent teachers in high schools and vocational schools found that principals' servant leadership practices had a direct positive effect on teachers' work engagement, extra-role behavior, and performance. Teachers who experienced service-oriented leadership were more willing to demonstrate dedication and to contribute beyond the minimum duties of their positions. These findings are important because the work of teachers often includes responsibilities that are not fully captured by formal job descriptions, such as mentoring learners, assisting colleagues, participating in school activities, and responding to community needs (Hermanto & Srimulyani, 2022).

Faith-based basic education institutions carry expectations that are both educational and value-centered. They are responsible for academic instruction while also seeking to express their religious mission through

relationships, service, character formation, and community involvement. Leadership in these institutions is therefore judged not only by administrative efficiency but also by the consistency between stated beliefs and daily conduct. Research conducted in faith-based schools found that servant leadership was reflected in leaders' efforts to develop people, serve the community, create supportive structures for staff, and place the interests of others before their own. The study also showed that faith-based leaders understood service as part of their calling and as a practical responsibility toward teachers, learners, and the wider school community (Shula et al., 2022).

Religious values may deepen the connection between servant leadership and positive teacher attitudes when those values are expressed through fair, caring, and supportive leadership practices. A study involving teachers from schools and colleges found that principals' religious values were positively associated with servant leadership and teacher job satisfaction. Servant leadership also served as a pathway through which religious values influenced teachers' experiences at work. These findings suggest that religious identity alone is not enough to produce a healthy school environment. The institution's beliefs must be translated into leadership behaviors that teachers can experience through respect, support, ethical decisions, and genuine concern for their welfare and development (Hossain et al., 2024).

Despite the growing literature on servant leadership, many studies have been conducted in business organizations, public schools, or higher education institutions. Research directly examining a shared servant leadership climate and teacher work engagement in faith-based basic education institutions remains limited. Faith-based schools have distinct missions, governance arrangements, value systems, and community expectations that may shape how teachers understand leadership and professional commitment. Findings from other organizational settings cannot simply be assumed to represent the experiences of teachers working in these institutions.

For this reason, the study seeks to examine how teachers perceive the servant leadership climate within their schools and how these perceptions relate to their work engagement. It gives attention to leadership as a shared and continuing experience rather than as the personal style of one administrator alone. By examining the relationship between service-oriented leadership practices and teachers' energy, dedication, and involvement in their work, the study may provide a clearer basis for leadership development, teacher-support programs, and institutional practices that remain faithful to both educational responsibilities and the service-centered mission of faith-based schooling.

Literature Review

Servant Leadership Climate in Educational Institutions

A servant leadership climate develops when teachers consistently experience leadership practices that place service, respect, professional growth, and collective welfare at the center of school administration. It differs from an isolated leadership behavior because it reflects a shared understanding of how authority is exercised across the institution. Teachers form this understanding through repeated interactions involving decision-making, communication, conflict resolution, recognition, and access to professional support. In a study involving 356 teachers, Al-Mahdy et al. (2016) found that teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership were connected with their level of job satisfaction, although perceptions varied according to personal and institutional characteristics. Their findings show that servant leadership becomes meaningful when teachers experience it through concrete administrative practices rather than through formal leadership statements alone. Gultekin and Kara (2022) likewise associated servant leadership characteristics with organizational health in schools. They described servant-oriented organizations as places that value people, develop employees, share leadership, build community, demonstrate authenticity, and provide purposeful direction. These qualities indicate that a servant leadership climate is formed when care for teachers is supported by structures, policies, and everyday leadership decisions. Within faith-based basic education institutions, such a climate may allow the school's commitment to service and human dignity to become visible in the treatment, participation, and professional development of teachers.

Nature and Dimensions of Teacher Work Engagement

Teacher work engagement refers to a positive and active relationship between teachers and their professional responsibilities. It is commonly reflected in vigor, dedication, and absorption. Vigor involves energy, persistence, and the willingness to exert effort even when teaching becomes demanding. Dedication is expressed through enthusiasm, pride, purpose, and a strong sense of identification with one's work. Absorption refers to deep concentration and involvement in professional tasks. Perera et al. (2018) examined the structure of teacher work engagement and supported its treatment as a professional condition with related but distinguishable dimensions. Their findings indicate that engagement should not be reduced to job satisfaction or willingness to remain employed because it concerns how teachers invest their physical, emotional, and cognitive resources in teaching. Granziera and Perera (2019) further found reciprocal relationships among teacher self-efficacy, work engagement, and work satisfaction. Teachers who felt capable of meeting instructional demands tended to participate more actively in their work, while engagement also contributed to favorable beliefs and attitudes over time. These findings show that teacher work engagement is both personal and responsive to workplace experience. It may grow when teachers feel competent, valued, and connected to meaningful institutional goals, but it may weaken when their responsibilities are accompanied by insufficient support or limited professional agency.

Leadership Support, Trust, and Teacher Efficacy

Leadership affects teacher work engagement partly by shaping the professional resources available within the school. Teachers are more likely to devote energy and sustained attention to their work when leaders trust their judgment, include them in meaningful decisions, recognize their contributions, and provide opportunities to influence school improvement. These practices strengthen teacher efficacy because they communicate that teachers possess the ability and authority to contribute beyond routine classroom duties. Cai et al. (2023) found that distributed leadership was positively associated with teacher work engagement and that teacher efficacy helped explain this relationship. Interpersonal trust also influenced the strength of the connection, showing that participation alone may not produce engagement when teachers do not feel secure in their relationships with leaders and colleagues. Although distributed leadership and servant leadership are distinct approaches, both recognize the value of shared responsibility, professional empowerment, and respectful working relationships. A servant leadership climate may therefore encourage engagement by giving teachers genuine opportunities to contribute while providing the support needed to carry out those responsibilities. When leadership participation is merely symbolic, teachers may become doubtful or withdrawn. When participation is supported by trust and professional respect, teachers are more likely to regard school goals as shared commitments and to approach their duties with confidence, initiative, and sustained involvement.

Mission-Centered Leadership in Faith-Based Schools

Leadership in faith-based basic education institutions carries the responsibility of maintaining academic quality while protecting the school's religious identity, moral commitments, and service-oriented mission. This responsibility requires more than the inclusion of religious activities in the school calendar. The institution's beliefs must be reflected in employment relationships, administrative decisions, professional expectations, and the treatment of members of the school community. Branson et al. (2019) argued that Catholic school leadership should integrate mission, identity, and practice rather than treat them as separate areas of administration. When mission is disconnected from daily leadership, the religious identity of the school may remain symbolic and have little influence on the experiences of teachers. Van der Zee (2022) similarly explained that leaders of Catholic schools must preserve mission integrity by ensuring that institutional principles are expressed through wise, ethical, and purposeful actions. Although these works center on Catholic education, their arguments are applicable to faith-based schools that seek consistency between declared beliefs and actual leadership practices. A servant leadership climate can help establish this consistency because service, humility, stewardship, moral responsibility, and concern for human development closely correspond with the aims of faith-based education. Teachers may become more engaged when they see that the institution's mission is practiced through fair decisions, supportive relationships, opportunities for growth, and genuine concern for their dignity and welfare.

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a cross-sectional multilevel explanatory design. This design was selected because the inquiry examined two connected levels of organizational experience. Servant leadership climate was treated as a shared perception formed among teachers working within the same institution, while work engagement was examined as an individual teacher outcome. The design allowed the study to determine whether differences in teacher engagement were associated with personal perceptions and with the broader leadership climate established within each school. Data were gathered without manipulating leadership practices, assigning participants to groups, or introducing an intervention. Although the design permitted the estimation of meaningful associations between the variables, it did not claim that servant leadership climate directly caused changes in teacher work engagement.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in selected faith-based basic education institutions in Quezon City. These schools provided elementary, junior high school, senior high school, or combined basic education programs guided by a formally stated religious mission. JCSGO Christian Academy, located at 156 15th Avenue, Cubao, Quezon City, served as the coordinating institution of the study. The locale was considered appropriate because faith-based schools combined academic responsibilities with institutional commitments related to service, moral formation, spiritual development, and community participation. These characteristics provided a suitable setting for examining whether service-centered leadership practices were reflected in teachers' energy, dedication, and involvement in their professional work.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The participants were teaching personnel employed in the selected faith-based basic education institutions. To qualify, a participant must have completed at least one full academic year in the institution, carried regular instructional responsibilities, and worked under the leadership structures being evaluated. School administrators whose duties were entirely managerial, temporary substitute teachers, personnel on extended leave, and employees without teaching assignments were excluded.

A two-stage proportionate cluster sampling procedure was used. During the first stage, participating institutions served as organizational clusters. During the second stage, eligible teachers from each institution were selected proportionately from official faculty lists through systematic random sampling. This procedure-maintained representation across participating schools while preventing institutions with larger teaching populations from dominating the dataset. Replacement participants were selected using the same sampling interval when an initially chosen teacher declined participation or failed to meet the inclusion requirements.

Research Instrument

Data were obtained through a structured questionnaire consisting of two principal sections. The first section measured servant leadership climate through an adapted version of the Servant Leadership Survey developed by van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011). The original instrument assessed leadership qualities such as empowerment, accountability, humility, authenticity, courage, interpersonal acceptance, stewardship, and the willingness of leaders to place the needs of others before personal recognition. The items were rewritten using a referent-shift format. Instead of asking teachers to evaluate only one administrator, the statements referred to how leaders generally behaved within the institution. This modification allowed the instrument to measure a shared leadership climate rather than the personal style of a single school official. The original Servant Leadership Survey underwent multidimensional development and validation procedures that supported its use as a measure of servant leadership.

The second section measured teacher work engagement through the nine-item Utrecht Work Engagement Scale, or UWES-9, developed by Schaufeli, Bakker, and Salanova (2006). The scale covered vigor, dedication,

and absorption. Vigor represented the teacher's energy and persistence at work, dedication referred to enthusiasm and sense of significance, and absorption described deep concentration in professional tasks. The UWES-9 had previously demonstrated factorial validity and satisfactory internal consistency across samples from several countries.

The adapted questionnaire used a five-point response format ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Before its administration, the instrument was examined by specialists in educational leadership, research measurement, basic education administration, and faith-based education. They assessed the relevance, clarity, cultural appropriateness, and alignment of each statement with the constructs being measured. Their ratings produced an overall content validity index of 0.94, which indicated strong agreement regarding the suitability of the items. Statements identified as repetitive, ambiguous, or overly general were revised before pilot administration.

A pilot test was conducted among teachers from a comparable faith-based school that was not included in the main investigation. The pilot responses were examined for completion time, item clarity, response variation, corrected item-total correlations, and internal consistency. The servant leadership climate section obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.96, while the teacher work engagement section obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.92. The complete instrument produced an overall coefficient of 0.95. The coefficients for the individual dimensions ranged from 0.82 to 0.94, showing that the items within each dimension consistently measured the intended construct. No item was removed solely to increase reliability. Item retention was based on both statistical performance and conceptual importance.

Data Gathering

Approval to conduct the study was secured from the authorized officials of the participating faith-based institutions. The researcher submitted a formal request containing the study objectives, participant requirements, data protection procedures, and proposed administration arrangements. After institutional approval had been granted, faculty lists were obtained through designated school coordinators and were used only for sampling.

Selected teachers received an invitation, an informed consent form, and the research questionnaire. A neutral coordinator handled the distribution and collection of the instruments to reduce the possibility that teachers would feel pressured by school administrators or by the researcher's administrative position. Participants were informed that school leaders would not be given access to individual answers or lists identifying those who accepted or declined participation.

The questionnaire was administered either through a secured electronic form or through printed copies placed in sealed envelopes, depending on the arrangement approved by each institution. Participants completed the instrument privately and returned it directly to the assigned coordinator. Printed questionnaires were placed in sealed collection envelopes, while electronic submissions were stored in a password-protected account. Completed questionnaires were checked for missing sections, duplicate entries, uniform response patterns, and other indications of unusable data. No participant was contacted to change an answer after submission.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed through multilevel structural equation modeling. This treatment was chosen because teachers were nested within schools and could not be assumed to provide completely independent observations. An ordinary correlation or single-level regression would have ignored the possibility that teachers from the same institution shared similar experiences of leadership.

Initial analysis included measures of central tendency, variability, distribution shape, missing data, and influential observations. Multilevel confirmatory factor analysis was then performed to determine whether the proposed dimensions of servant leadership climate and work engagement were supported at the teacher and institutional levels. Model adequacy was assessed through the comparative fit index, Tucker-Lewis index, root mean square error of approximation, and standardized root mean square residual at both levels. These indices were interpreted together rather than through a single fit criterion.

Before teacher ratings were combined to represent servant leadership climate, within-group agreement and between-school variability were examined. The within-group agreement coefficient, or ($r_{\{wg(j)\}}$), was used to determine whether teachers from the same institution showed sufficient agreement in their leadership ratings. The intraclass correlation coefficient, ICC(1), estimated the portion of variance associated with school membership, while ICC(2) evaluated the reliability of the aggregated institutional means. Leadership ratings were aggregated only after these indicators supported the treatment of servant leadership as a school-level climate.

The structural portion of the model estimated the relationship between institutional servant leadership climate and individual teacher work engagement. Robust maximum likelihood estimation was applied to reduce the effect of nonnormal response distributions. Results were presented through standardized path coefficients, cluster-adjusted standard errors, 95 percent confidence intervals, and exact probability values. Statistical significance was evaluated at the 0.05 level, but interpretation also considered coefficient magnitude and confidence interval width. This approach allowed the findings to show not only whether an association was statistically detectable but also whether it carried practical importance for leadership and teacher-support practices.

Ethical Consideration

The study followed the principles of informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, fairness, and protection from workplace disadvantage. Participants received a clear explanation of the study before answering the questionnaire. They were informed that participation was optional, that they could leave any item unanswered, and that they could withdraw before submitting the completed instrument without penalty.

Special safeguards were applied because the researcher held an administrative position in a faith-based school. Recruitment and questionnaire collection were handled by neutral coordinators. Participation did not form part of performance appraisal, promotion, teaching assignment, contract renewal, or any administrative decision. No school official was informed about which teachers refused or agreed to participate.

Names, employee numbers, email addresses, and other direct identifiers were not written on the questionnaire. Institution codes and participant codes were used during analysis. Findings were reported in combined form, and no statement was attributed to a particular teacher or school. Electronic records were encrypted and stored in a password-protected file, while printed materials were secured in a locked cabinet. Access was limited to the researcher and authorized research personnel. The data were retained only for the period required for research verification and publication, after which electronic files were permanently deleted and printed questionnaires were securely destroyed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. *Fit Indices of the Multilevel Measurement Models*

Measurement Model	χ^2	df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR Within	SRMR Between
Servant Leadership Climate	1,098.42	742	0.949	0.942	0.044	0.039	0.071
Teacher Work Engagement	88.36	46	0.968	0.958	0.047	0.031	0.054
Combined Measurement Model	1,476.51	1,018	0.944	0.938	0.046	0.043	0.074

Note. CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; SRMR = standardized root mean square residual.

The results in Table 1 showed that the proposed measurement structures adequately represented the collected data. The comparative fit index and Tucker-Lewis index values for the separate and combined models were all above 0.90. The RMSEA values ranged from 0.044 to 0.047, indicating that the differences between the proposed models and the observed response patterns were small. The SRMR values at both the teacher and institutional levels also remained within acceptable limits.

The servant leadership climate model produced a CFI of 0.949 and a TLI of 0.942. These results supported the treatment of servant leadership climate as a multidimensional construct consisting of empowerment, accountability, standing back, humility, authenticity, courage, interpersonal acceptance, and stewardship. The dimensions were related but did not represent exactly the same leadership behavior. For example, leaders could be perceived as caring and humble while still receiving lower ratings for confronting difficult issues or holding members accountable. Retaining the dimensions therefore provided a more accurate picture than reducing servant leadership to a single general impression.

The teacher work engagement model obtained stronger fit values, with a CFI of 0.968 and a TLI of 0.958. The findings supported the distinction among vigor, dedication, and absorption. Although these dimensions formed an overall engagement construct, they described different features of teachers' work experiences. A teacher could believe strongly in the value of teaching and remain dedicated to the school's mission while experiencing reduced energy or difficulty concentrating because of workload demands.

The combined measurement model also demonstrated satisfactory fit. This result established that servant leadership climate and teacher work engagement were empirically distinguishable. The teachers did not merely provide favorable responses to all positive statements. Instead, they differentiated their experiences of leadership from their levels of energy, dedication, and concentration. This distinction was essential because the study aimed to determine whether leadership climate was associated with engagement rather than treating both constructs as interchangeable expressions of general job satisfaction.

The measurement results were consistent with the multidimensional structure of servant leadership proposed by van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011). They also supported the three-component understanding of work engagement advanced by Schaufeli et al. (2006). The acceptable fit of the models provided sufficient basis for proceeding with aggregation tests and structural analysis.

Table 2. *Within-School Agreement and Intraclass Correlation Coefficients for Servant Leadership Climate*

Dimension	Median ($r_{\{wg(j)\}}$)	ICC(1)	ICC(2)	Aggregation Decision
Empowerment	0.82	0.16	0.74	Supported
Accountability	0.76	0.12	0.68	Marginal
Standing Back	0.80	0.15	0.72	Supported
Humility	0.85	0.20	0.79	Supported
Authenticity	0.81	0.17	0.75	Supported
Courage	0.72	0.10	0.64	Marginal
Interpersonal Acceptance	0.84	0.18	0.77	Supported
Stewardship	0.86	0.22	0.81	Supported
Overall Servant Leadership Climate	0.82	0.18	0.78	Supported

Table 2 presents the statistical evidence for treating servant leadership as a shared institutional climate. The overall within-school agreement coefficient was 0.82, showing that teachers working in the same faith-based institution generally held similar views about the leadership practices they experienced. The overall ICC(1) of 0.18 indicated that 18 percent of the variation in servant leadership ratings was attributable to differences among schools rather than differences among individual teachers alone.

The ICC(2) of 0.78 showed that the institutional mean ratings were sufficiently reliable for school-level analysis. These results supported the assumption that leadership climate was not merely an individual opinion. Teachers within the same school appeared to encounter common policies, leadership routines, decision-making practices, and patterns of administrative support that shaped their shared judgments.

Stewardship obtained the strongest agreement and reliability indicators. Its median ($r_{\{wg(j)\}}$) was 0.86, while its ICC(1) and ICC(2) values were 0.22 and 0.81, respectively. Teachers within the same schools therefore tended to agree on whether their leaders protected the long-term interests of the institution and promoted

responsibility for the school community. This finding was reasonable in faith-based schools because stewardship was often expressed through visible institutional decisions concerning resources, community programs, faculty responsibilities, and mission-related activities.

Humility and interpersonal acceptance also showed strong within-school agreement. These qualities were likely observed through ordinary interactions, such as how administrators received suggestions, handled mistakes, responded to personal concerns, and communicated with teachers. When leaders consistently listened, admitted limitations, and treated teachers respectfully, employees within the same school were likely to form similar perceptions.

Accountability and courage produced weaker ICC(2) values of 0.68 and 0.64. Although teachers generally agreed within their schools, the institutional averages for these two dimensions were less stable than those of the other dimensions. These findings indicated that accountability and courage were experienced less consistently. Some teachers may have observed administrators confronting difficult issues, correcting ineffective practices, or applying policies firmly, while others may have had fewer opportunities to witness such behavior.

The lower reliability for courage was particularly important. Service-oriented leadership could be understood too narrowly as kindness, patience, or accommodation. Servant leadership, however, also required leaders to address misconduct, communicate difficult decisions, and protect institutional values even when these actions created discomfort. Eva et al. (2019) explained that servant leadership involved both concern for followers and responsible stewardship of the organization. The present findings suggested that the caring dimensions of servant leadership were more firmly established than its demanding dimensions.

Despite the weaker coefficients for accountability and courage, the overall servant leadership climate achieved sufficient agreement and reliability. The dimensions were therefore retained in the descriptive analysis, while the structural analysis used the latent overall climate construct. This procedure reduced the risk of drawing strong institutional conclusions from dimensions that showed only marginal aggregation reliability.

Table 3. *Perceived Level of Servant Leadership Climate in Faith-Based Basic Education Institutions*

Servant Leadership Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation	Rank
Stewardship	4.19	0.52	Agree	1
Humility	4.12	0.53	Agree	2
Interpersonal Acceptance	4.03	0.59	Agree	3
Authenticity	3.97	0.57	Agree	4
Standing Back	3.89	0.60	Agree	5
Empowerment	3.84	0.61	Agree	6
Accountability	3.56	0.65	Agree	7
Courage	3.33	0.70	Moderately Agree	8
Overall Servant Leadership Climate	3.87	0.50	Agree	

Note. 4.21 to 5.00 = Strongly Agree; 3.41 to 4.20 = Agree; 2.61 to 3.40 = Moderately Agree; 1.81 to 2.60 = Disagree; 1.00 to 1.80 = Strongly Disagree.

Table 3 showed that the overall servant leadership climate was rated at an agreeable level, with a mean of 3.87 and a standard deviation of 0.50. Teachers generally experienced school leadership as service-oriented, respectful, and concerned with the welfare of the institution. The overall rating, however, did not reach the strongly agree category. This indicated that servant leadership was present but was not uniformly practiced across all areas of leadership.

Stewardship received the highest mean of 4.19. Teachers generally believed that their leaders took responsibility for the school's welfare, protected institutional resources, and promoted service to the wider community. Faith-based schools often placed strong emphasis on mission, moral responsibility, and responsible

use of institutional resources. The high stewardship rating suggested that these values were visible in leadership practice.

The standard deviation of 0.52 showed that teacher responses concerning stewardship were relatively close to one another. This result was consistent with the aggregation statistics presented in Table 2. Stewardship appeared to be one of the most recognizable features of leadership across the participating institutions. Administrators may have demonstrated it through decisions that prioritized the continuity of school programs, learner welfare, community outreach, and the long-term interests of the institution.

Humility ranked second, with a mean of 4.12. Teachers generally perceived leaders as willing to listen, recognize the contributions of others, and avoid placing personal recognition above institutional service. Humility was particularly relevant to faith-based leadership because authority in these institutions was often expected to reflect moral responsibility and care for others. The result suggested that administrators were generally approachable and did not rely solely on formal authority when interacting with faculty members.

Interpersonal acceptance also received a favorable rating, with a mean of 4.03. Teachers generally believed that leaders treated them with consideration and responded to mistakes or personal limitations with fairness. This did not necessarily mean that poor performance was ignored. Rather, it indicated that correction and accountability were usually expressed without humiliating or devaluing the teacher.

Authenticity obtained a mean of 3.97. Teachers generally perceived consistency between what leaders communicated and how they behaved. In faith-based institutions, authenticity carried particular importance because employees expected school leaders to demonstrate the same moral and spiritual principles promoted in official statements. A gap between declared values and actual administrative practices could weaken trust. The agreeable rating suggested that such a gap was not dominant, although the score also showed room for improvement.

Standing back and empowerment received means of 3.89 and 3.84, respectively. The standing back result indicated that leaders generally allowed teachers and teams to receive credit for successful programs. The empowerment result showed that teachers were provided some authority and opportunity to contribute to school decisions. Still, these dimensions ranked below stewardship, humility, interpersonal acceptance, and authenticity.

The lower ranking of empowerment indicated that participation may not always have involved meaningful influence. Teachers could have been consulted without being given sufficient authority to shape final decisions. In some institutions, administrators may have encouraged suggestions while retaining highly centralized approval procedures. This pattern could limit teachers' sense of ownership, especially when decisions concerned curriculum implementation, learner support, faculty development, or school programs.

Accountability received a mean of 3.56. Although the result remained within the agree range, it was considerably lower than the ratings for stewardship and humility. Teachers may have experienced uncertainty regarding the consistency with which standards were communicated and applied. Some faculty members may have perceived that expectations differed depending on position, length of service, or closeness to administrators. Accountability could also have been affected by leaders' hesitation to address underperformance when they wished to preserve harmony.

Courage produced the lowest mean of 3.33 and was interpreted as moderately agree. Teachers were less certain that administrators were willing to question ineffective practices, communicate unpopular decisions, or confront behavior that conflicted with institutional standards. This finding revealed the clearest concern in the servant leadership climate.

Leadership in a faith-based school could become overly cautious when administrators attempted to maintain peace or avoid appearing unsympathetic. Yet service-oriented leadership did not require leaders to avoid difficult conversations. Courage was needed when school leaders defended teachers from unfair demands, corrected inconsistent policies, addressed persistent performance concerns, or resisted practices that weakened the school's mission. Lee et al. (2020) found that servant leadership contributed to positive employee outcomes because it combined concern for people with ethical and responsible leadership. Care without courage could produce accommodation rather than genuine service.

The overall pattern showed that the participating schools were stronger in caring and mission-related practices than in firm and participatory leadership. Teachers generally experienced kindness, humility, acceptance, and stewardship. They were less convinced that leaders consistently shared authority, enforced standards, and confronted difficult organizational issues. The result pointed to a need for leadership development that joined compassion with clear accountability and principled decision-making.

Table 4. *Level of Teacher Work Engagement*

Work Engagement Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation	Rank
Dedication	4.08	0.56	Agree	1
Vigor	3.68	0.62	Agree	2
Absorption	3.39	0.68	Moderately Agree	3
Overall Teacher Work Engagement	3.72	0.55	Agree	

Table 4 showed that the teachers' overall work engagement was agreeable, with a mean of 3.72 and a standard deviation of 0.55. Teachers generally displayed commitment to their professional responsibilities, but the results also revealed differences among the three dimensions of engagement. Dedication was notably stronger than vigor and absorption.

Dedication ranked first, with a mean of 4.08. Teachers generally regarded their work as meaningful and important. They appeared proud of their profession and remained emotionally connected to their teaching responsibilities. This result was consistent with the character of faith-based education, where teaching was often understood not only as employment but also as service and participation in the institution's mission.

The high dedication score suggested that teachers maintained a strong belief in the value of their work even when other aspects of engagement were less favorable. Teachers may have continued to attend school activities, support learners, and contribute to institutional programs because they considered their responsibilities personally significant. Their commitment was likely strengthened by relationships with learners, colleagues, families, and the faith community.

Dedication, however, did not guarantee that teachers possessed consistently high energy. Vigor obtained a mean of 3.68. Teachers generally agreed that they approached their duties with effort and persistence, but the rating remained considerably below the mean for dedication. This gap suggested that teachers wanted to perform their work well but may have experienced periods of tiredness, emotional strain, or reduced energy.

The demands placed on teachers in basic education extended beyond lesson preparation and classroom instruction. They also completed assessment records, attended meetings, communicated with parents, participated in institutional programs, supervised activities, and assisted with religious or community events. These responsibilities could weaken energy even among teachers who remained strongly committed to the mission of the school.

Absorption received the lowest mean of 3.39 and was interpreted as moderately agree. Teachers were less likely to report uninterrupted concentration or deep immersion in their professional tasks. The relatively high standard deviation of 0.68 indicated that experiences varied considerably. Some teachers may have worked with sustained focus, while others faced frequent interruptions and competing responsibilities.

The low absorption result may have reflected fragmented work routines. Teachers could have been required to shift quickly among classroom instruction, learner concerns, administrative forms, parent messages, committee work, and school activities. Frequent changes in responsibility could make it difficult to concentrate on lesson design, assessment, or instructional improvement for extended periods.

The result may also have been related to workload rather than lack of commitment. A teacher could feel proud of the profession while still struggling to remain deeply focused because of fatigue or overlapping duties. Bakker and Albrecht (2018) explained that engagement was shaped by the balance between job demands and the

resources available to employees. When demands remained high and resources were limited, dedication could persist while energy and concentration weakened.

The findings therefore portrayed a teaching workforce that remained committed but was not fully protected from strain. Dedication was a clear strength, while vigor required support and absorption presented a more serious concern. School leaders could not assume that strong commitment would automatically prevent exhaustion. Continued reliance on teachers' sense of mission without attending to workload, staffing, role clarity, and uninterrupted work time could gradually reduce engagement.

The result was also consistent with the reciprocal relationship among teacher efficacy, satisfaction, and engagement described by Granziera and Perera (2019). Teachers were more likely to remain energetic and involved when they felt capable, supported, and able to accomplish meaningful work. Leadership practices that removed unnecessary barriers and protected teachers' time could therefore help convert dedication into stronger vigor and absorption.

Table 5. *Variance Components and Intraclass Correlations for Teacher Work Engagement*

Engagement Outcome	Within-School Variance	Between-School Variance	ICC	Percentage of Variance Between Schools
Vigor	0.312	0.066	0.175	17.5%
Dedication	0.260	0.076	0.226	22.6%
Absorption	0.355	0.062	0.149	14.9%
Overall Work Engagement	0.286	0.067	0.190	19.0%

Table 5 showed that teacher work engagement varied both within and across faith-based basic education institutions. The ICC for overall engagement was 0.190. This meant that 19 percent of the differences in work engagement were associated with the institution in which teachers worked. The remaining variation occurred among teachers within the same schools.

The school-level share of 19 percent was meaningful. Work engagement was often viewed as an individual condition influenced by motivation, personality, professional experience, or personal circumstances. The result demonstrated that institutional conditions also mattered. Teachers working in the same school shared leadership practices, workload systems, communication routines, policies, and mission-related expectations. These common conditions contributed to similarities in their engagement.

Dedication had the highest ICC at 0.226. Approximately 22.6 percent of its variation was associated with differences among institutions. This suggested that some faith-based schools were more successful than others in creating a strong collective sense of purpose. The way leaders communicated the school's mission, recognized teacher contributions, and connected daily work with institutional values may have influenced how strongly teachers identified with their responsibilities.

Vigor produced an ICC of 0.175. Institutional differences accounted for 17.5 percent of the variation in teacher energy and persistence. This finding suggested that some schools provided working conditions that better sustained teachers' energy. Differences in workload distribution, administrative support, scheduling, staffing, and access to teaching resources may have contributed to these variations.

Absorption had the lowest ICC at 0.149, although the school-level component remained substantial. Concentration was partly shaped by school practices but was also strongly affected by individual teaching assignments, personal responsibilities, classroom demands, and work habits. Teachers within the same institution could experience different levels of interruption depending on their grade level, subject area, committee assignments, or additional duties.

The between-school differences justified the use of multilevel analysis. Had the study relied solely on ordinary regression, the 19 percent institutional component of engagement would have been overlooked. Teachers from the same school could not be treated as entirely independent because they shared organizational conditions.

Zahed-Babelan et al. (2019) found that leadership influenced teacher engagement through school culture, empowerment, and job characteristics. The variance pattern in the present study supported this organizational explanation. Engagement was not produced by personal motivation alone. The institution established conditions that either protected or weakened teachers' ability to invest energy and attention in their work.

The result also carried practical significance for faith-based school systems. A teacher who transferred from one institutional climate to another could experience a change in engagement even when personal values and professional competence remained the same. This meant that interventions directed only at individual motivation would be incomplete. Schools also needed to examine leadership structures, communication systems, decision-making arrangements, workload practices, and faculty support.

Table 6. *Multilevel Structural Effects of Servant Leadership Climate on Teacher Work Engagement*

School-Level Predictor	Teacher-Level Outcome	Unstandardized Estimate	SE	Standardized Coefficient	z-value	p-value	95% Confidence Interval	Decision
Servant Leadership Climate	Vigor	0.41	0.13	0.44	3.15	0.002	[0.16, 0.66]	Significant
Servant Leadership Climate	Dedication	0.55	0.14	0.59	3.93	0.001	[0.28, 0.82]	Significant
Servant Leadership Climate	Absorption	0.28	0.13	0.31	2.15	0.032	[0.03, 0.53]	Significant
Servant Leadership Climate	Overall Work Engagement	0.46	0.11	0.52	4.18	0.001	[0.24, 0.68]	Significant

Model information: CFI = 0.946; TLI = 0.940; RMSEA = 0.045; SRMR within = 0.042; SRMR between = 0.068. Servant leadership climate explained 32.8 percent of the between-school variance in overall teacher work engagement.

Table 6 showed that servant leadership climate had a statistically significant positive relationship with overall teacher work engagement. The standardized coefficient was 0.52, with a p-value of 0.001. The 95 percent confidence interval ranged from 0.24 to 0.68 and did not include zero. The null hypothesis of no significant relationship between servant leadership climate and teacher work engagement was therefore rejected.

The coefficient indicated a moderately strong school-level relationship. Teachers working in institutions with a stronger servant leadership climate tended to report higher energy, dedication, and involvement in their work. The result did not indicate that leadership climate was the sole source of engagement. Personal beliefs, teaching conditions, professional competence, relationships with learners, and demands outside work also mattered. Still, leadership climate accounted for a substantial portion of the differences observed among schools.

Servant leadership climate explained 32.8 percent of the between-school variance in overall engagement. This meant that nearly one-third of the institutional differences in teacher engagement were associated with differences in service-oriented leadership. The remaining school-level variance may have been related to compensation practices, workload, staffing, school size, governance arrangements, resource availability, or differences in institutional culture.

Dedication showed the strongest relationship with servant leadership climate. The standardized coefficient was 0.59, with a p-value of 0.001. Teachers were more likely to experience pride, enthusiasm, and significance in their work when leaders demonstrated service, humility, authenticity, acceptance, empowerment, and stewardship.

This finding was particularly meaningful in faith-based institutions. Teachers may have entered these schools with a personal commitment to service, but their dedication could be strengthened when leaders treated

the school's mission as a lived responsibility. When leadership practices reflected the values promoted by the institution, teachers could see a clearer connection between their work and the broader purpose of the school.

The strong effect on dedication also suggested that leadership credibility mattered. Teachers were more likely to embrace institutional goals when leaders modeled the principles expected from employees. When administrators asked teachers to serve, sacrifice, or support school programs while failing to demonstrate the same commitment, the mission could lose persuasive force. Authentic servant leadership helped prevent the institution's religious identity from becoming merely symbolic.

The relationship between servant leadership climate and vigor was also significant, with a standardized coefficient of 0.44 and a p-value of 0.002. Teachers in stronger servant leadership climates tended to report greater energy and persistence. Supportive leadership may have strengthened vigor by reducing uncertainty, recognizing effort, providing resources, and making teachers feel that difficulties were shared rather than carried alone.

The vigor finding should not be interpreted to mean that supportive leadership removed fatigue. The mean presented in Table 4 showed that vigor remained below dedication. Servant leadership could help sustain effort, but it could not fully compensate for excessive workload, insufficient staffing, or poorly coordinated responsibilities. Leaders needed to express care not only through encouraging words but also through practical decisions about time, assignments, and resources.

Absorption had the weakest but still significant relationship with servant leadership climate. The standardized coefficient was 0.31, with a p-value of 0.032. Teachers working in more service-oriented schools tended to show greater concentration, but the relationship was smaller than those found for dedication and vigor.

This weaker effect was reasonable because absorption depended on factors beyond leadership climate. Classroom interruptions, teaching schedules, administrative tasks, technological demands, parent communication, and individual work habits could affect concentration. A respectful leadership climate could support focus, but teachers also required protected time, manageable duties, and clear work priorities.

The overall result supported the position that servant leadership affected engagement through the working environment created by school leaders. Aboramadan et al. (2020) found that servant leadership was associated with educators' engagement through psychological ownership, intrinsic motivation, and alignment between employees and their work. The present result suggested that teachers became more invested when they felt that leaders valued their contribution and treated them as responsible members of the institution.

The findings also agreed with the broader evidence reviewed by Lee et al. (2020), which showed that servant leadership was associated with favorable employee attitudes and behaviors beyond the effects explained by other leadership approaches. The present study added an institutional perspective by showing that the shared climate of the school, not only an individual teacher's opinion of a particular leader, was related to engagement.

Table 7. Comparison of Between-School Variance Before and After the Inclusion of Servant Leadership Climate

Work Engagement Outcome	Variance in Unconditional Model	Residual Variance After Leadership Climate	Variance Reduction	Percentage Explained
Vigor	0.066	0.047	0.019	28.8%
Dedication	0.076	0.045	0.031	40.8%
Absorption	0.062	0.051	0.011	17.7%
Overall Work Engagement	0.067	0.045	0.022	32.8%

Table 7 showed how much institutional variation in engagement was reduced after servant leadership climate was entered into the model. The largest reduction occurred in dedication. Leadership climate explained 40.8 percent of the between-school differences in teachers' dedication. This result strengthened the conclusion that school leadership played an important role in shaping whether teachers found their work meaningful and worthy of commitment.

The reduction in vigor variance was 28.8 percent. Service-oriented leadership therefore explained a meaningful portion of the differences in teacher energy across institutions. Schools with more supportive

leadership climates appeared better able to sustain teachers' willingness to exert effort. Still, more than two-thirds of the school-level variation in vigor remained unexplained, pointing to the influence of other working conditions.

Only 17.7 percent of the between-school variation in absorption was explained by servant leadership climate. The smaller percentage indicated that leadership climate alone was insufficient to address teachers' concentration difficulties. Faith-based schools needed to examine operational practices that fragmented teachers' attention, including overlapping assignments, frequent noninstructional requests, inadequate preparation time, and unclear task priorities.

For overall engagement, the variance reduction was 32.8 percent. This was a practically meaningful result because leadership climate represented only one part of the school environment. A single organizational construct explaining nearly one-third of institutional variation suggested that leadership development could produce noticeable improvements in teachers' working experiences.

The variance reduction also showed why the low scores for courage and accountability deserved attention. The overall servant leadership climate was already positively related to engagement, but the climate could have been stronger if leaders demonstrated greater firmness in addressing ineffective practices and greater consistency in applying standards. Improving only the already strong dimensions, such as stewardship and humility, might produce limited additional benefit. Leadership development needed to focus on the weaker aspects that prevented servant leadership from being experienced as both caring and effective.

The findings suggested that school leaders should not equate servant leadership with avoiding conflict or granting every request. A healthy servant leadership climate involved listening and compassion, but it also required the courage to protect teachers from unreasonable demands, correct unfair workloads, enforce professional standards, and make difficult decisions for the good of learners and the institution.

CONCLUSION

Servant leadership climate was positively and significantly associated with teacher work engagement in faith-based basic education institutions. Teachers generally perceived their school leaders as strong in stewardship, humility, interpersonal acceptance, and authenticity, while courage, accountability, and empowerment remained less consistently practiced. Teacher engagement was favorable overall, with dedication emerging as the strongest dimension, although vigor and absorption showed that some teachers experienced reduced energy and difficulty sustaining concentration. The findings further showed that a meaningful portion of the differences in work engagement occurred across institutions and that servant leadership climate explained a substantial share of these differences, particularly in teachers' dedication. Based on these conclusions, faith-based school leaders should strengthen leadership practices that combine care and service with clear accountability, shared decision-making, and principled courage. Leadership development programs should include training in difficult conversations, fair implementation of policies, delegation of meaningful authority, workload management, and the protection of teachers' preparation and recovery time. Schools should also establish regular mechanisms for gathering confidential faculty feedback, reviewing task distribution, recognizing teacher contributions, and aligning administrative practices with the institution's faith-based mission. Future studies may examine additional factors such as organizational trust, spiritual leadership, workload, psychological safety, and teacher well-being to provide a fuller explanation of work engagement in faith-based educational settings.

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