

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NURSING TEACHERS' PERCEIVED SERVANT LEADERSHIP AND OCCUPATIONAL WELL-BEING IN SHANDONG YINGCAI UNIVERSITY, CHINA

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Abstract: This study aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the current situation of perceived nursing teachers' perceived servant leadership and occupational well-being at Shandong Yingcai University, and to explore the correlation between perceived nursing teachers' perceived servant leadership and occupational well-being providing theoretical reference for the occupational well-being of teachers. This study used a questionnaire survey method to investigate 384 in-service nursing teachers at Shandong Yingcai University, and collected 190 valid questionnaires. The results of this study indicated that (1) Nursing teachers had a high level of teachers' perceived servant leadership and occupational well-being. (2) There were significant differences in teachers' perceived servant leadership of different genders, educational backgrounds, and teaching age. (3) There were significant differences in the occupational well-being of teachers of different genders, ages, educational backgrounds, and teaching age. (4) There was a significant positive correlation between nursing teachers' perceived servant leadership and occupational well-being. Suggestions based on research findings: Schools should attach importance to cultivating servant leadership among teachers, emphasize democratic management, encourage teachers to improve their qualities, and enhance their occupational well-being.

Keywords: College Teachers, Servant Leadership, Occupational Well-being

Introduction

Employees and leaders usually complete daily work in the same scene and environment, and the leader's work style and management mode significantly impact employees' work status, well-being, and passion. Along with the development of the market economy, more and more researchers were paying attention to the essential practical value of servant leadership theory. Especially in practical situations, servant leaders were usually more likely to gain employees' trust. They emphasize optimizing the work atmosphere, advocating for an independent, responsible, conscientious work spirit and

philosophy (Greenleaf, 1970).

China was currently in a crucial period of social development and transformation, where the pace of life for the general public was significantly accelerating, the talent structure was constantly changing, and the demand for talent in various industries continuously increased. Not only that, the source of college students and the number of admissions continued to grow, and the teaching difficulty and workload of higher education have increased significantly. The national government has also imposed more stringent standards and requirements for each college in such an environment. As a major province in education, Shandong has abundant educational resources. Higher education institutions in the province face fierce market competition and enormous educational, enrollment, and employment challenges.

To continuously expand social influence, it was necessary to develop the education scale, and teachers must take a more proactive approach to educational work. Relying solely on the direct and mandatory leadership of teachers by leaders within universities was no longer enough to ensure that university organizations win in fierce market competition. How to stimulate the work initiative of teachers and enhance their occupational well-being has become a focus of attention for many researchers. Faced with the rapid changes in the market environment, universities need to seek ways to transform organizational management. Servant leadership focuses more on achieving interaction and sharing between leaders and employees. As a new leadership model, it aimed to care for subordinates and reach others. This approach could significantly impact employees' work behavior and job well-being, which was more conducive to stimulating employee performance and ultimately ensuring the organization's stable, healthy progress and development (Han & Zhuang, 2020). To help Chinese college teachers maintain their work enthusiasm and creativity in long-term and complex teaching activities, university managers need to implement more friendly leadership methods, manage the teacher group with more caring and servant leadership, facilitate the resolution of teacher work difficulties, alleviate teacher anxiety, and enhance their occupational well-being.

Research Objectives

(1) To identify the current status of nursing teachers' perceived servant leadership at Shandong Yingcai University.

(2) To identify the current status of nursing teachers' occupational well-being at Shandong Yingcai University.

(3) To determine the differences in nursing teachers' perceived servant leadership and occupational well-being at Shandong Yingcai University of different demographic backgrounds (including gender, age, educational background, teaching age, and academic title).

(4) To analyze the relationship between nursing teachers' perceived servant leadership and

occupational well-being at Shandong Yingcai University.

Literature Review

Research on Servant Leadership

Grisaffe (2016) pointed out the concept of servant leadership from three aspects: leader motivation, leadership model and leader's mind. First, one of the keys to servant leadership lies in the different personal motives for assuming leadership responsibilities. The key intrinsic motivation of servant leaders came from the demand for service, which came from the love full of compassion. In addition, servant leadership emphasized that the personal needs, interests and goals of followers should be raised to the position before leaders. In this way, a fundamental cognition could be fed back. Servant leadership emphasized the role of a centrifugal force, thereby shifting followers from self-service to other service directions. It is productive and has the function of catalyzing pro-society, which would have a more positive impact on people and things around it, and it changes the broken structure of the social world (Zhang & Fan, 2020).

Servant leadership could be considered a component of altruism and a leadership practice with a tendency towards altruistic behavior. Similarly, Benjamin (2015) pointed out that servant leaders always prioritize serving others and prioritizing the organization's sustainable development. Servant leadership could provide maximum benefits to all stakeholders while generating optimal long-term sustainable growth, which was also in line with the characteristic of altruism.

Sorting out the characteristics of servant leadership could help strengthen the understanding of servant leadership. Currently, there was no unified view in academia on the characteristics of servant leadership. Zhang & Fan's (2020) analysis of the characteristics of servant leadership was similar, mainly including the following five points: firstly, being good at listening, foresight, persuasive, the characteristics of conceptualization, and humble attitude and a servant attitude. For example, excessive service was detrimental to the leader's image, family harmony, and employee work innovation (Ouyang, 2019). Hu (2019) focused on using SPSS 24 to explore the mediating role of leadership identity between servant leadership and police work well-being. Research conducted an internal consistency test on three scales: servant leadership, leadership identity, and job satisfaction.

At the same time, from a relational perspective, Sun (2019) proposed based on social exchange theory and social learning theory that servant leadership was more conducive to achieving employee task performance and would positively impact employee well-being. Zhang (2021) built a targeted research measurement model based on self-determination theory, distributed questionnaires to 500 new generation high school teachers in Shanxi Province, and comprehensively applied empirical research methods and hypothesis methods to conclude that servant leadership had a significant impact on the well-being of new generation high school teachers. Moreover, it also emphasized the intermediary

effect of team member exchange between the influence of servant leadership on the subjective well-being of the new generation of middle school teachers. It thought that sufficient organizational support could adjust the correlation between servant leadership and the well-being of the new generation of middle school teachers to a large extent.

Research on Occupational Well-being

At present, the generally accepted view was that occupational well-being mainly referred to the comprehensive evaluation of the quality of life of an individual based on the standards set by himself, which included the coordination between the individual and the real life situation and the perfect unity of the self, which would further produce positive emotions of self-recognition and appreciation (Chen, 2015). Guo (2022) believed that the specific definition of occupational well-being referred to the comprehensive evaluation and emotional feelings of the subject's quality of life-based on their standards. It was mainly divided into two parts and three basic characteristics, and it was also an important overall psychological standard for measuring the subject's living standards.

Similarly, Wang (2022) also pointed out that occupational well-being was an overall evaluation of an individual's quality of life, and proposed that the structure of occupational well-being was unanimously divided into cognitive and emotional components, namely positive and negative emotions. Continuous involvement in the workplace, occupational well-being and satisfaction positively impacts health and could improve the productivity and performance of employees in the organization. Psychologists generally refer to well-being as a positive emotion.

Many factors could affect occupational well-being, including external factors such as interpersonal relationships, education and teaching, career development, and job benefits. Internal factors include age related factors such as subjective well-being between the ages of 36 and 45, which was higher than other age groups. In this age group, life pressure was relatively low, and life was stable, and there were other factors such as personality traits and self-concept (Wang, 2022). External factors include social support, while internal factors include individual personality traits, attribution styles, physical conditions, socio-economic status, etc. In addition, well-being and death were closely related. Teachers' sense of well-being came from the satisfaction of personal needs and the realization of self-potential. Watching the students they educate grow and become successful, their inner sense of achievement and satisfaction was teachers' well-being. The subjective well-being of teachers was not only related to demographic variables such as gender and age, but also to social support, mental health, conflict, and so on (Long, 2021). The significant predictive factors for occupational well-being included psychological health satisfaction, monthly salary, satisfaction with salary, quality of life, current hospital stay, length of service in the ward, shift, age, job satisfaction, and satisfaction with doctor conduct and work performance.

The literature on occupational well-being was collected and analyzed, and research on the

measurement of occupational well-being found that Chen (2015) used the Overall Happiness Scale to measure occupational well-being. The measurement results showed that Thai teachers had significantly higher levels of occupational well-being than Chinese teachers. Long (2021) also used the Overall Happiness Scale to measure the occupational well-being of teachers, and the results showed that teachers had good occupational well-being. Specifically, divorced teachers had higher levels of occupational well-being than unmarried and married teachers, teachers with higher academic titles had higher levels than those with other academic titles, and teachers with more than 21 years of work had higher levels of occupational well-being than those with other working years. Teachers with incomes between 10000 and 15000 had higher levels of occupational well-being than those with other income levels. Shi et al. (2022) used binary logistic regression analysis to identify and analyze the influencing factors of job satisfaction and occupational well-being, and the results showed a significant impact between job satisfaction and occupational well-being. On the basis of literature review and expert consultation, combined with the characteristics of civilian positions, a questionnaire on the occupational well-being of civilian nurses in military hospitals could also be developed. The questionnaire included seven dimensions: work emotion, salary, work environment, professional identity, work output, interpersonal relationships, and well-being.

Research on the Correlation between Servant Leadership and Occupational Well-being

At the same time, servant leadership also had some effects. For example, in order to explore how perceived servant leadership and employee self-efficacy interact to affect employee service quality in the hotel industry, Shao & Lei (2020) used polynomial regression equations and response surface analysis in methodology to conduct two studies. Both studies came to similar patterns and results. That is, self-efficacy moderated the relationship between servant leadership and service quality. When both the perceived level of servant leadership and self-efficacy were high, the service quality of employees was higher. The results also showed that the greater the difference between the perceived level of servant leadership and self-efficacy, the higher the service quality of employees. In order to determine whether servant leadership has established a service attitude among employees, servant leadership aimed to encourage employees to take responsibility, cooperate, and create high-quality interactions.

Winifrida et al. (2016) hypothesized that servant leadership would influence organizational citizenship behavior through team member exchanges. The results showed that servant leadership was positively correlated with team member exchange, which was positively correlated with organizational citizenship behavior, taking on additional tasks beneficial to the organization, and creativity. The estimation of the auxiliary program showed that servant leadership had an important indirect impact on the three target variables through team member exchange. The research results emphasized creating favorable working conditions to promote positive, high-quality team member exchanges. Driven by the autonomous motivation framework of basic psychological needs in self-determination theory, servant

leadership's focus on employee development also helped to realize employees' three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and connection. The satisfaction of these three needs promoted the improvement of employees' work performance and organizational citizenship behavior in different ways. Chiniara & Bentein (2016) collected data from 247 supervisors from a large Canadian technology design and manufacturing company. The structural equation model results showed that servant leadership had a significant predictive effect on satisfaction with the three needs.

Research on the relationship between servant leadership and occupational well-being. Li (2022) constructed a theoretical model of how servant leadership affects employee work passion and conducted multi-level research and discussion on its internal mechanism, influence path, and boundary conditions through data analysis and other methods. Among them, based on demographic variable control, comprehensive application of regression analysis and correlation analysis, it was demonstrated that there was a significant positive predictive relationship between servant leadership and job satisfaction in China's national conditions. In addition, empirical research paradigms and hierarchical regression analysis were used to demonstrate the positive impact of servant leadership on employee binary work passion, while confirming the negative impact of servant leadership on employee compulsive work passion. Finally, Bootstrap tests and other methods verified the mediating effect of individual organization matching on the correlation between servant leadership and employee work passion. Zhang (2021) also confirmed the mediating effect between servant leadership, team member exchange, organizational support, and occupational well-being by using literature research methods to sort out and analyze relevant literature on servant leadership, team member exchange, organizational support, and occupational well-being. Sun (2019) proposed that based on the perspective of relationship, social exchange theory and social learning theory, servant leadership was more conducive to the excellent achievement of employees' task performance, and positively impacted employees' well-being. Moreover, the exchange of leading members and the exchange of team members could play an excellent intermediary effect. It was especially reflected in the link between service leadership and employee task performance and the link between service leadership and employee well-being. This approach could fundamentally enhance the well-being and pride of employees.

Methodology

This research took the teachers at Shandong Yingcai University as the research object. There was a total of 384 nursing teachers in the school. According to Kaiser's (1970) requirement for sample size. Using a convenient sampling method to distribute questionnaires to 193 nursing teachers at Shandong Yingcai University. A total of 190 valid questionnaires were collected, and the effective return rate reached 98.45%.

The Perceived Servant Leadership Scale developed by Barbuto (2006) and the well-being

questionnaire developed by Fazio (1977) for measurement. The Perceived Service Leadership Questionnaire, which included five dimensions: butler spirit, rewarding society, altruistic motivation, service orientation, and emotional comfort. There was a total of 20 items, the reliability and validity were at a good level.

Teacher Occupational Well-being Questionnaire, which consisted of 18 items and conducts surveys from the following dimensions: satisfaction and interest in life, concerns for health, energy, melancholy or happy mood, control over emotions and behaviors, relaxation and tension. The reliability and validity were at a good level.

Results

Demographic Analysis of Questionnaire Participants

In this questionnaire survey, A total of 190 valid questionnaires filled out by nursing teachers were collected as research samples. The demographic backgrounds of nursing teachers involved in the study include five aspects: gender, age, educational background, teaching age, and academic title. To understand the sample distribution of nursing teachers of different demographic backgrounds, SPSS software was used to calculate the frequency and percentage of each option. From the perspective of gender variables, the nursing teachers at Shandong Yingcai University were primarily female, accounting for 82.6% of the total. At the same time, there were only 33 male nursing teachers, accounting for less than 20%. From the perspective of age variables, 62.6% of nursing teachers were between the ages of 26 -30 years old, with 36 teachers aged 31-40 years old accounting for 18.9%. There were 24 teachers aged 25 years old and below, accounting for 12.6%, 7 teachers aged 41-50 years old, and the least number of teachers 51 years old and above, with only 4. From the perspective of educational variables, 70.5% of nursing teachers had a master's degree, with the highest number of teachers. There were 34 teachers with a doctor's degree, accounting for 17.9% of the total sample, and 22 teachers with a bachelor's degree, accounting for 11.6%. From the perspective of teaching age variables, the number of nursing teachers with teaching age of 2 years or less was the highest, with 80 teachers accounting for 42.1%, followed by 3-5 years of teaching age, accounting for 41.1%, 17 teachers with teaching age of 10 years or more, accounting for 8.9%, and the number of teachers with 6-10 years of teaching age was the lowest, with 15 teachers accounting for 7.9%. From the perspective of job title variables, 52.1% of nursing teachers were lecturers, with 99 people accounting for 52.1% of the total sample. 37 teachers had assistant titles, accounting for 19.5%, 23 teachers had professor titles, 12.1%, 20 teachers had associate professor titles, accounting for 10.5%, and 11 teachers currently didn't have academic titles.

Descriptive Statistics on the Levels of Nursing Teachers' Perceived Servant Leadership and Occupational Well-being

1) The overall nursing teachers’ perceived servant leadership was $M= 4.285$, indicating that the current nursing teachers’ perceived servant leadership was high. The means range for each dimension of perceived servant leadership was between 4-4.5, indicating that the current each dimension was high. Among them, the mean of butler spirit was the highest at $M=4.373$, and the mean of altruistic motivation was the lowest at $M=4.226$, as Table 1 shows.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Current Teachers’ Perceived Servant Leadership

Variable	M	SD	Interpretation
Butler spirit	4.373	0.995	High
Rewarding society	4.330	0.983	High
altruistic motivation	4.226	1.035	High
Service orientation	4.244	0.962	High
Emotional comfort	4.250	0.980	High
Perceived servant leadership	4.285	0.946	High

2) The overall nursing teachers’ occupational well-being was $M=4.220$, indicating that the current level of occupational well-being was high. The means of various dimensions of occupational well-being were also within the range of 4-4.5, indicating that the current level of each dimension was high. Among them, the mean control over emotions and behaviors was the highest at $M=4.277$, while the mean control over relaxation and tension was the lowest at $M=4.177$, indicating that nursing teachers performed the best in controlling emotions and behavior, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Current Nursing Teachers’ Occupational Well-being

Variable	M	SD	Interpretation
Satisfaction and interest in life	4.257	1.036	High
Concerns about health	4.276	1.045	High
Energy	4.247	1.019	High
Melancholic or joyful mood	4.263	1.029	High
Relaxation and tension	4.177	1.066	High
Occupational well-being	4.220	2.189	High

Differences Analysis on the Levels of Nursing Teachers’ Perceived Servant Leadership and Occupational Well-being Compared with Demographic Factors

There were significant differences in the nursing teachers’ perceived servant leadership and occupational well-being of different demographic backgrounds (gender, age, educational background, teaching age, academic title). There were significant differences in teachers’ perceived servant leadership of different genders, educational backgrounds, and teaching age. There were significant differences in the occupational well-being of teachers of different genders, ages, educational backgrounds, and teaching age.

There were significant differences in nursing teachers’ perceived servant leadership of different

genders (T=-2.897, P=0.004). In addition, it was found that indicating significant differences between nursing teachers of different genders regarding butler spirit, rewarding society, altruistic motivation, service orientation, and emotional comfort, P<0.05, the results as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Differences in Nursing Teachers’ Perceived Servant Leadership of Different Genders

Variable	Gender	N	M	SD	T	P
Butler spirit	Male	33	3.848	1.174	-3.427***	0.001
	Female	157	4.484	0.920		
Rewarding society	Male	33	3.840	1.056	-3.222***	0.001
	Female	157	4.433	0.938		
Altruistic motivation	Male	33	3.750	0.984	-2.967**	0.003
	Female	157	4.326	1.020		
Service orientation	Male	33	3.924	0.948	-2.124*	0.035
	Female	157	4.312	0.954		
Emotional comfort	Male	33	3.931	0.875	-2.068*	0.040
	Female	157	4.316	0.990		
Perceived servant leadership	Male	33	3.859	0.891	-2.897**	0.004
	Female	157	4.374	0.936		

Note: *P < 0.05, ** P < 0.01, *** P < 0.001

There were significant differences in nursing teachers’ occupational well-being of different genders (t=-3.056, P=0.003). Indicating significant differences in satisfaction and interest in life, health concerns, energy, melancholic or joyful mood, control over emotions and behaviors, and relaxation and tension dimensions of different genders P<0.05, the results as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Differences in Nursing Teachers’ Occupational Well-being of Different Genders

Variable	Gender	N	M	SD	T	P
Satisfaction and interest in life	Male	33	3.757	1.125	-3.122**	0.002
	Female	157	4.363	0.988		
Concerns about health	Male	33	3.772	1.139	-3.112**	0.002
	Female	157	4.382	0.997		
Energy	Male	33	3.825	1.076	-2.655**	0.009
	Female	157	4.336	0.987		
Melancholic or joyful mood	Male	33	3.848	1.093	-2.584*	0.011
	Female	157	4.350	0.997		
Control over emotions and behavior	Male	33	3.787	1.092	-3.167**	0.002
	Female	157	4.380	0.950		
Relaxation and tension	Male	33	3.666	1.119	-3.097**	0.002
	Female	157	4.285	1.026		
Occupational well-being	Male	33	4.183	2.364	-3.056**	0.003
	Female	157	4.438	2.094		

Note: *P < 0.05, ** P < 0.01

Correlation Analysis among Nursing Teachers' Perceived Servant Leadership and Occupational Well-being

There was a significant positive correlation ($r=0.903$) between the nursing teachers' perceived servant leadership and their occupational well-being. There was also a varying degree of positive correlation between perceived servant leadership and various dimensions of occupational well-being. The overall relevant situation is shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Correlation Analysis Between Nursing Teachers' Perceived Servant Leadership and Occupational Well-being

Variable	Satisfaction and interest in life	Concerns about health	Energy	Melancholic or joyful mood	Control over emotions and behavior	Relaxation and tension	Occupational well-being
Butler spirit	0.804**	0.810**	0.820**	0.814**	0.852**	0.788**	0.832**
Rewarding society	0.829**	0.843**	0.850**	0.832**	0.873**	0.819**	0.859**
Altruistic motivation	0.831**	0.830**	0.859**	0.832**	0.859**	0.842**	0.858**
Service orientation	0.848**	0.859**	0.868**	0.858**	0.891**	0.848**	0.880**
Emotional comfort	0.854**	0.869**	0.877**	0.863**	0.885**	0.859**	0.886**
Perceived servant leadership	0.872**	0.881**	0.895**	0.879**	0.913**	0.870**	0.903**

Note: ** $P < 0.01$

Discussion

Differences in Nursing Teachers' Perceived Servant Leadership

There were significant differences in the perception of servant leadership among teachers of different genders, with female teachers having a higher level of perceived servant leadership than male teachers. The research results of Zhuang (2022) indicated that male teachers had a higher level of perceived servant leadership, which might be due to differences in research scope and sample distribution. There was no significant difference in the perception of servant leadership among teachers of different ages, but there were significant differences in the dimensions of butler spirit and rewarding society. Young teachers have not accumulated enough teaching age yet formed a complete teaching system. They were more likely to receive help and encouragement from their leaders in the work environment, and their perceived level of servant leadership was higher. Teachers over 50 years old were already in the stage of career determination, with rich teaching age and strong adaptability. With doctor's degrees teachers have the highest level of perceived servant leadership. Teachers with 3-5 years of teaching age had the highest level of perceived servant leadership, while those with 6-10 years of

teaching age had the lowest score. Their physical functions, innovation ability, and struggle ability have reached their peak, and their perceived level of servant leadership was relatively high (Zhu, 2018). There was no significant difference in the perception of servant leadership among teachers of different academic titles.

Differences in Nursing Teachers' Occupational Well-being

There were significant differences in the occupational well-being of teachers of different genders, with female teachers having a higher level of occupational well-being. Yao (2019) also found that male teachers had a lower occupational well-being than female teachers, but Zeng (2007) found that male teachers had a more robust occupational well-being than female teachers. Whether there were differences in teacher occupational well-being due to gender differences was closely related to local economic level, cultural environment, and school atmosphere. There were significant differences in occupational well-being among teachers of different ages. This study only targets nursing teachers, which was related to the characteristics of professional teaching and career development prospects. There were significant differences in occupational well-being among teachers of different educational backgrounds. Teachers with a bachelor's degree had the highest occupational well-being, while those with a doctor's degree had the lowest. Because teachers with higher educational qualifications had received education for a more extended period, they believed that their professional skills were higher, and they had higher requirements for their work performance and professional abilities. They were likelier to experience a gap when encountering teaching difficulties or promotion obstacles in actual work (Xue et al., 2023). Teachers with 3-5 years of teaching age had the highest occupational well-being, while 6-10 years had the lowest. There was no significant difference in the occupational well-being of teachers of different academic titles.

Relationship between Nursing Teachers' Perceived Servant Leadership and Occupational Well-being

There was a significant positive correlation between the nursing teachers' perceived servant leadership and their occupational well-being. This conclusion was consistent with Chen et al. (2017) research findings and Fang et al. (2018). The perceived level of servant leadership was higher, and employees were more likely to experience being cared for and served in their work and feel more satisfaction and well-being. A servant leader's positive attitude and approach in handling and interpreting events could also influence subordinates, reduce power distance, make it easier for employees to regain work enthusiasm, improve job satisfaction, reduce work pressure and burnout, and enhance occupational well-being (Pundt & Venz, 2017).

Conclusions

(1) The level of nursing teachers' perceived servant leadership and occupational well-being was

high from the perspective of the current level of nursing teachers' perceived servant leadership and occupational well-being.

(2) From the different demographic backgrounds, there were significant differences in the perception of servant leadership of different genders, educational backgrounds, and teaching age. However, there was no significant difference in the perception of servant leadership among teachers of different ages and academic titles.

(3) From the differences in nursing teachers' occupational well-being of different demographic backgrounds, there were significant differences in occupational well-being among teachers of different genders, ages, educational backgrounds, and teaching age. At the same time, there was no significant difference in occupational well-being among teachers of different academic titles.

(4) The relationship between nursing teachers' perceived servant leadership and occupational well-being, there was a significant positive correlation between nursing teachers' perceived servant leadership and occupational well-being.

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