

# **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED SERVANT LEADERSHIP AND TEACHING AUTONOMY AMONG INSTRUCTORS AT HUNAN INTERNATIONAL ECONOMICS UNIVERSITY, CHINA**

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**Abstract:** This study aimed to investigate the perceived servant leadership and teaching autonomy of instructors at Hunan International Economics University, China. It examined demographic differences and explored the relationship between these two variables. A quantitative research method using a survey questionnaire was adopted. A total of 308 valid responses were obtained from instructors. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, t-tests, ANOVA, and Pearson correlation. The results revealed that instructors had a high level of perceived servant leadership and teaching autonomy. Significant differences were found based on gender, age, educational background, position, and teaching experience. Moreover, a significant positive relationship between perceived servant leadership and teaching autonomy was confirmed. Finally, based on the research results, targeted suggestions were proposed, according to group differences and enhancing teaching autonomy based on servant leadership.

**Keywords:** Servant Leadership; Teaching Autonomy; Hunan International Economics University;

## **Introduction**

Chinese higher education has achieved a dual breakthrough in scale and quality under the promotion of the national medium- and long-term education reform plan. As of June 2024, there are 2,868 regular higher education institutions nationwide, and the gross enrollment ratio in higher education has risen to 59.6%, officially entering the stage of universalization. This system has not only become an important support for the national innovation-driven development strategy but also bears the historical mission of building a lifelong learning system for all. However, behind the expansion of scale lies a deep-seated contradiction: the constraints of the traditional hierarchical management system on teaching autonomy are becoming increasingly prominent. Although financial investment and hardware construction have laid the foundation for modernization, instructors generally lack decision-making

power in core areas such as curriculum design, teaching method selection, and academic research direction (Zhang & Dong, 2024). Administrative approval processes and standardized evaluation indicators further squeeze the space for teaching innovation, making it difficult to achieve fundamental breakthroughs in the efficiency of academic resource transformation and the quality of talent cultivation (Wang, 2024). To address this dilemma, the concept of servant leadership has gradually been introduced into the governance reform of higher education in China, with the core aim of transforming managers from "administrative controllers" to "academic servants," releasing instructors' innovative momentum through institutional empowerment and organizational ecological reconstruction (Meng, 2017).

Existing research confirmed that the individualized perception of leadership behavior by organizational members has a stronger explanatory power for subordinates' psychological dynamics and behavioral tendencies compared to leaders' self-evaluated leadership styles (Liden et al., 2015). Focusing on the educational field, instructors' perceptions of managers' servant leadership behaviors have become a core explanatory variable for analyzing their professional attitudes and teaching autonomy (Greenleaf, 2008). This perspective emphasized that the effectiveness of leadership depends not only on the actual actions taken by managers but also on instructors' perceptions and interpretations of their leadership behaviors (Zhong et al., 2024). Therefore, exploring the relationship between servant leadership and teaching autonomy from the perspective of instructors' perceptions could more accurately reveal the micro-mechanisms of governance reform in higher education.

As a representative of private higher education in Hunan International Economics University, China has typical research value in its governance model and the current state of teacher development. As of 2024, the university has formed an educational pattern centered on undergraduate education and coordinated development across multiple disciplines, but it also faced the problem of lagging governance capacity during rapid expansion. Some departments have initially demonstrated the stimulating effect of servant leadership on teaching autonomy through pilot mechanisms such as "empowerment of academic committees" and "project-based curriculum development." Based on the above background, this study took the instructors of Hunan International Economics University as the sample, focusing on the relationship between their perceived servant leadership and teaching autonomy, aiming to provide micro-empirical evidence for the modernization of higher education governance and to explore replicable reform paths for similar institutions in building an empowering management ecosystem.

## **Research Objectives**

- 1) To assess the current levels of perceived servant leadership among instructors at Hunan International Economics University.
- 2) To assess the current levels of teaching autonomy among instructors at Hunan International

Economics University.

3) To analyze the differences in perceived servant leadership among instructors under different demographic backgrounds (gender, age, educational background, position, and teaching experience).

4) To analyze the differences in teaching autonomy among instructors under different demographic backgrounds (gender, age, educational background, position, and teaching experience).

5) To explore the correlation between perceived servant leadership and teaching autonomy among instructors.

## Literature Review

### *Theoretical Foundation*

***Servant Leadership Theory:*** Servant leadership Theory was proposed by Greenleaf (1998), and its core lies in subverting the traditional hierarchical view of "leadership first," advocating that leaders should adhere to the philosophical concept of "service first." This theory emphasized that the primary responsibility of leaders was to serve their followers, stimulating their potential by meeting their needs, ultimately achieving mutual development for the organization and its followers (Rachmawati & Lantu, 2014). Specifically, Servant Leadership Theory included several key dimensions: Service orientation referred to leaders prioritizing the interests of followers, facilitating their growth by providing resources, support, and development opportunities; Empathy and listening mean that leaders must possess a high degree of empathy, actively listen to the voices of followers, and understand their needs and concerns (Heyler, & Martin, 2018). Empowerment involved granting followers more autonomy and decision-making power, stimulating their intrinsic motivation and sense of responsibility; Community awareness emphasized a sense of community within the organization, promoting mutual support and cooperation among members.

***Self-Determination Theory:*** Self-Determination Theory was proposed by Deci & Ryan (2012), focusing on the development and maintenance of human intrinsic motivation. It emphasized that individuals could spontaneously generate intrinsic motivation based on the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which in turn drives positive behaviors and outcomes (Deci et al., 2017). Specifically, the need for autonomy referred to individuals wanting to have control over their actions and make choices based on personal will; the need for competence meant individuals desire to feel capable and effective in their interactions with the environment; the need for relatedness referred to individuals expecting to establish close connections with others, feeling accepted and cared for (Gagné et al., 2022).

This study was supported by Greenleaf's (1998) Servant Leadership Theory and Deci & Ryan's (2012) Self-Determination Theory, exploring the relationship between the perceived servant leadership and teaching autonomy among instructors at Hunan International Economics University, China.

Specifically, servant leadership influences teaching autonomy among instructors through the following pathways: First, the perceived servant leadership and the satisfaction of instructors' psychological needs. Servant leaders grant instructors more decision-making power in teaching, encouraging them to participate in curriculum design and teaching reform, thereby satisfying instructors' need for autonomy. By providing professional development opportunities, resource support, and feedback, instructors' perceptions of servant leadership could help them enhance their teaching abilities and increase their sense of competence. Instructors could feel a sense of community within the organization through their perceived servant leadership, and they could also enhance their sense of belonging by building a supportive organizational culture. Second, the satisfaction of psychological needs and the stimulation of intrinsic motivation. In addition, the promotion of intrinsic motivation and teaching autonomy. The enhancement of intrinsic motivation encourages instructors to actively explore teaching methods and reflect on teaching practices, thereby improving teaching autonomy.

Servant Leadership Theory and Self-Determination Theory provided strong theoretical support for understanding the relationship between perceived servant leadership and teaching autonomy among instructors. Servant leadership promoted the development of teaching autonomy by satisfying instructors' psychological needs and stimulating their intrinsic motivation. This theoretical framework not only helped deepen the understanding of the factors influencing teaching autonomy but also provided practical guidance for school administrators to enhance teaching autonomy among instructors.

### ***Research on the Servant Leadership***

By reviewing existing research on the perceived servant leadership among instructors in Chinese universities, this study found that servant leadership, as an important theoretical paradigm in the field of university organizational management, exhibits multidimensional pathways and hierarchical mechanisms of effectiveness.

In the theoretical construction, Meng (2017) systematically reconstructed the concept of servant leadership. The study argued that servant leadership, as an employee-centered leadership style, essentially reflected employees' comprehensive evaluation of leadership management methods and styles. At the psychological intervention level, Jiang and Li (2020) revealed the protective mechanism of perceived servant leadership on instructors' professional mental health. The servant leadership could significantly reduce instructors' emotional exhaustion when coping with professional stress through specific behaviors such as actively addressing instructors' professional development needs, providing teaching and research resource support, and constructing an equal and collaborative work environment.

At the behavioral driving level, Zhuang (2022) revealed the deep-seated mechanism of servant leadership on university instructors' work behaviors. When instructors perceive that leaders exhibit servant leadership traits, their level of prosocial motivation would be significantly enhanced. This leadership style could stimulate instructors' intrinsic value recognition and altruistic tendencies through

specific behaviors such as focusing on instructors' development needs, providing resource support, and constructing an equal collaborative atmosphere, thereby strengthening their intrinsic drive to participate in achieving organizational public goals.

### ***Research on Teaching Autonomy***

Chinese scholars have conducted in-depth multidimensional research on the teaching autonomy of university instructors, constructing a relatively complete research framework from different levels, such as intrinsic motivation, external constraints, and relational validation.

In terms of intrinsic motivation and external support mechanisms, Li (2024) proposed that the development of teaching autonomy among university instructors was influenced by dual factors. On the intrinsic side, they emphasize that the enhancement of instructors' autonomous capabilities and the realization of teaching reflection abilities were core driving forces. On the external support side, school management institutions need to build a sound support system, creating favorable conditions for instructors' autonomous practice through institutional design, resource provision, and platform construction. In response to prominent contradictions in real development, Zhao (2007) revealed through empirical research the four major bottlenecks that constrain teaching autonomy among instructors: weak awareness of autonomous development among instructors led to insufficient intrinsic motivation, lack of research capabilities limits professional depth development, insufficient awareness and ability to develop curriculum resources affect the space for teaching innovation, and a rigid school evaluation mechanism weakens the willingness for autonomous practice.

Regarding constraining factors, Bi (2006) proposed more concrete constraints through research. On the intrinsic constraint level, the low educational background of instructors was directly related to insufficient professional authority, while the lack of professional awareness and research spirit led to a lack of theoretical elevation in teaching practice. On the external constraint side, the administrative tendency of the current educational management system and standardized evaluation methods objectively limit instructors' autonomous decision-making space.

In relational research, Tang et al. (2014) focused on the relationship mechanism between teaching autonomy and work performance. Through an analysis of background variables such as gender, age, teaching age, and title of instructors, the study confirmed that self-direction, self-assertion, self-development awareness, and sense of responsibility were core influencing factors.

### ***Research on the Relationship Between Servant Leadership and Teaching Autonomy***

In her research, Luo (2018) indicated that there was a significant correlation between servant leadership and employee proactive behavior. When applied to the context of educational organizations, a similar significant bidirectional reinforcement relationship exists between servant leadership and teaching autonomy among instructors. At the same time, Lai (2018) also proposed the same viewpoint. She further stated that servant leadership could effectively enhance instructors' professional subjectivity

by empowering them to participate in school governance. When instructors were included in core decision-making processes such as curriculum construction and teaching evaluation, their role perception shifted from being mere executors to co-conspirators in educational reform. Moreover, the research by Jia et al. (2020) suggested that, at the level of resource assurance, servant leadership constructed a three-dimensional teaching support network. When instructors encounter difficulties in classroom reform, timely academic support and technical assistance not only reduce the cost of trial and error in teaching but also strengthen their confidence in continuous improvement.

When instructors receive sufficient organizational support, their professional capital will exhibit a proliferation effect. The emotional support and instrumental resources provided by servant leadership essentially build a resource reserve for instructors' professional development. This resource reserve not only enhanced instructors' resilience in facing teaching challenges but also stimulated their motivation to actively optimize teaching strategies. The stronger the organizational support perceived by instructors, the stronger their willingness to engage in teaching innovation. This autonomy was reflected in both independent decision-making regarding teaching content and methods, as well as proactive planning of professional development paths, ultimately driving an overall leap in the quality of school education.

## Methodology

Hunan International Economics University, China currently has 9 secondary universities with a total of 1,762 full-time instructors. This study took the instructors of this university as the research subjects. This study adopted a stratified sampling method. According to the Morgan table sample size standard by Krejcie & Morgan (1970), when the total number of samples was 1,762, extracting 317 samples was reasonable. Based on this, a total of 317 questionnaires were distributed in this study, and 308 valid data points were finally obtained. The effective return rate reached 97.16%.

**Perceived Servant Leadership Questionnaire:** This study adopted the "Servant Leadership Questionnaire" developed by Meng (2017). The questionnaire consisted of 14 items, divided into three dimensions: vision, service, and empowerment. The overall Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was .858, and the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for each dimension ranged from .705 to .765, all greater than .70, indicating that the questionnaire had good reliability. In terms of validity, the KMO value was .875, and the Bartlett's test of sphericity showed  $p < 0.001$ , reaching a significant level, making it suitable for factor analysis; three common factors extracted account for a cumulative explanation of total variance of 57.422%, indicating good scale validity.

**Teaching Autonomy Questionnaire:** This study used the "Teaching Autonomy Questionnaire" developed by Yao & Shen (2010). The questionnaire consisted of 37 items, divided into seven dimensions: purposefulness, spontaneity, responsibility, independence, competence, self-



reflection, and self-control. The overall Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of the questionnaire was .954, and the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for each dimension ranged from .710 to .805, all greater than .70, indicating good reliability. In terms of validity, the KMO value was .904, and the Bartlett's test of sphericity showed  $p < 0.001$ , reaching a significant level, which was suitable for factor analysis; seven common factors were extracted, explaining a cumulative total variance of 70.612%, indicating that the scale had good validity.

## Results

### *Demographic Analysis of the Respondents*

The specific situation of the sample size for participants in this survey under different demographic backgrounds was as follows: In terms of gender, there were 148 male instructors, accounting for 48.1% of the total sample size, and 160 female instructors, accounting for 51.9% of the total sample size; in terms of age, there were 76 instructors aged 30 and below, accounting for 24.7% of the total sample size, 94 instructors aged 31-40, accounting for 30.5% of the total sample size, and 83 instructors aged 41-50, accounting for 26.9% of the total sample size. There were 55 instructors aged 51 and above, accounting for 17.9% of the total sample size; in terms of educational background, there were 141 instructors with a bachelor's degree or below, accounting for 45.8% of the total sample size, and 167 instructors with a master's degree or above, accounting for 54.2% of the total sample size; in terms of position, there were 163 lecturers/teaching assistants, accounting for 52.9% of the total sample size, and 145 professors/associate professors, accounting for 47.1% of the total sample size; in terms of teaching experience, there were 112 instructors with less than 5 teaching experience, accounting for 36.4% of the total sample size, 128 instructors with 6-10 teaching experience, accounting for 41.6% of the total sample size, and 68 instructors with 11 years or more of teaching experience, accounting for 22.0% of the total sample size.

### *Current Level of Perceived Servant Leadership and Teaching Autonomy among Instructors at Hunan International Economics University, China*

1) This study conducted descriptive statistics on 308 valid data collected to analyze the current level of perceived servant leadership among instructors at Hunan International Economics University, China. As shown in Table 1, the overall mean of perceived servant leadership among instructors was 3.70, with dimension means ranging from 3.59 to 3.77; among them, the service dimension had the highest mean, while the vision dimension had the lowest mean. Overall, the perceived servant leadership among instructors at Hunan International Economics University was at a high level.

2) This study conducted descriptive statistics on 308 valid data points collected, analyzing the current level of teaching autonomy among instructors at Hunan International Economics University, China. As shown in Table 2, the overall mean of teaching autonomy among instructors was 3.79, with the means of each dimension ranging from 3.68 to 3.87; among them, the dimensions of spontaneity

and competence had relatively higher means, while the dimension of purposefulness had the relatively lowest mean. Overall, the teaching autonomy among instructors at Hunan International Economics University was at a high level.

**Table 1:** Current Level of Perceived Servant Leadership among Instructors (N=308)

Dimension	M	SD	Interpretation
Vision	3.59	0.59	High
Service	3.77	0.46	High
Empowerment	3.72	0.46	High
Servant leadership	3.70	0.42	High

**Table 2:** Current Level of Teaching Autonomy among Instructors (N=308)

Dimension	M	SD	Interpretation
Purposefulness	3.68	0.51	High
Spontaneity	3.87	0.49	High
Responsibility	3.72	0.53	High
Independence	3.74	0.53	High
Competence	3.87	0.54	High
Self-reflection	3.81	0.56	High
Self-control	3.86	0.54	High
Teaching autonomy	3.79	0.46	High

***There are significant differences in perceived servant leadership among instructors under different demographic backgrounds at Hunan International Economics University.***

1) There was a significant difference in the perceived servant leadership among instructors of different genders, China, with female instructors perceiving servant leadership significantly higher than male instructors.

2) There was a significant difference in the perceived servant leadership among instructors with different ages, with instructors aged 41-50 and 51 and above perceiving servant leadership significantly higher than those aged 30 and below.

3) There was a significant difference in perceived servant leadership among instructors with different educational backgrounds, with instructors holding a bachelor's degree or below perceiving servant leadership significantly higher than those with a master's degree or above.

4) There was no significant difference in perceived servant leadership among instructors with different positions and the differences in perceived servant leadership among instructors in different professions are minimal.



5) There was a significant difference in perceived servant leadership among instructors by different teaching experience, with instructors having 11 years or more of experience perceiving servant leadership significantly higher than those with 5 years or less and those with 6-10 years.

***There are significant differences in teaching autonomy among instructors under different demographic backgrounds at Hunan International Economics University, China.***

1) There was a significant difference in teaching autonomy among instructors of different genders, with female teaching autonomy among instructors higher than that of male instructors.

2) There was a significant difference in the teaching autonomy among instructors with different ages, with instructors aged 51 and above showing significantly higher teaching autonomy than those aged 30 and below and those aged 31-40, and instructors aged 31-40 showing significantly higher teaching autonomy than those aged 30 and below.

3) There was no significant difference in the teaching autonomy among instructors with different educational backgrounds, and the levels of teaching autonomy among instructors with different educational backgrounds are not much different.

4) There was a significant difference in teaching autonomy among instructors with different positions, with professors/associate professors having significantly higher teaching autonomy than lecturers/teaching assistants.

5) There was a significant difference in teaching autonomy among instructors with different teaching experience. Instructors with 11 years or more of teaching experience have significantly higher teaching autonomy than those with 5 years or less and those with 6-10 years. Instructors with 6-10 teaching experience also have significantly higher teaching autonomy than those with 5 years or less.

***There is a significant positive correlation between the perceived servant leadership and teaching autonomy among instructors at Hunan International Economics University, China.***

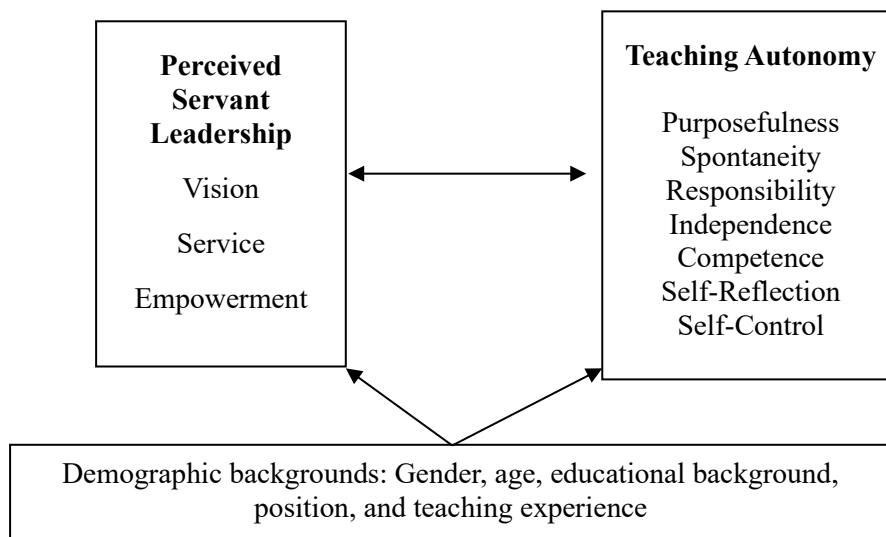
**Table 3:** Correlation of Perceived Servant Leadership and Teaching Autonomy among Instructors

Dimensions	Vision	Service	Empowerment	Servant leadership
Purposefulness	.292**	.430**	.496**	.486**
Spontaneity	.259**	.264**	.347**	.347**
Responsibility	.148**	.373**	.404**	.368**
Independence	.342**	.404**	.472**	.486**
Competence	.184**	.324**	.423**	.371**
Self-reflection	.203**	.302**	.428**	.372**
Self-control	.174**	.308**	.403**	.352**
Teaching autonomy	.264**	.397**	.492**	.459**

Note: \*\* p<.01

As shown in Table 3, the correlation coefficient  $r = .459$  between the perceived servant leadership and the teaching autonomy among instructors, which presented a significance level of 0.01, indicating that there was a significant positive correlation between perceived servant leadership and teaching autonomy among instructors. The correlation coefficients between other dimensions range from .148 to .496, all presenting a significant level of 0.01, indicating that all dimensions show a significant level of 0.01. In summary, there was a significant positive correlation between the perceived servant leadership and teaching autonomy among instructors at Hunan International Economics University, China.

This study examined relevant research materials on the instructors' perceived servant leadership and teaching autonomy at Hunan International Economics University. The research conceptual framework for this study is shown in Figure 1:



**Figure 1: Research Conceptual Framework**

## Discussion

### *Discussion on the Differences in Perceived Servant Leadership among Instructors at Hunan International Economics University, China under Different Demographic Backgrounds*

The servant leadership emphasized resource provision and emotional care, while female instructors might be more concerned about the impact of organizational support on work-family balance (Meng, 2017). Instructors over 41 are generally in a stable career phase, placing greater emphasis on organizational identity and self-actualization. Servant leadership could meet their needs for professional respect and decision-making participation through clear vision communication and power delegation. In contrast, younger instructors are in a career adaptation phase and may focus more on basic resource

provision and skill enhancement. If organizational support did not accurately match their short-term needs, it may lead to perceptual bias. Instructors with longer teaching experience have a deeper understanding of organizational culture and leadership styles. Servant leadership could create stable, positive perceptions through continuous resource support and power sharing (Zhuang, 2022). Instructors with shorter teaching experience might be in an adaptation phase, while those with 6-10 years of experience may experience reduced sensitivity to leadership behavior due to career burnout or developmental bottlenecks, leading to relatively lower perception levels.

***Discussion on the Differences in Teaching Autonomy among Instructors at Hunan International Economics University, China under Different Demographic backgrounds***

Female instructors may place greater emphasis on meaning construction and self-regulation during the teaching process, with their spontaneity and responsibility driven by intrinsic motivation being more pronounced. As instructors age, they gradually enter a mature career phase, and long-term teaching practice allows them to establish stable patterns in meaning construction and behavioral regulation, fully developing their self-reflection and independence (Wu, 2011). Professors and associate professors typically bear more academic leadership responsibilities, allowing for greater decision-making space and higher demands for independence and self-control. In contrast, lecturers and teaching assistants may experience limitations in their autonomy in the dimensions of spontaneity and purposefulness due to career advancement pressures or teaching task allocations (Liu & Ouyang, 2019). Instructors with longer teaching experience have a deeper understanding of the teaching context, and their ability to construct teaching meaning and regulate behavior is strengthened through continuous practice (Tang et al., 2014).

***Discussion on the Relationship between Perceived Servant Leadership and Teaching Autonomy among Instructors at Hunan International Economics University, China***

Firstly, the vision within the servant leadership that instructors perceive could construct clear organizational development goals, thereby enhancing instructors' sense of identity and belonging to the school, which stimulates their intrinsic motivation. After integrating their teaching pursuits with the organizational vision, the purposefulness and responsibility of their teaching behavior are strengthened, and the demand for actively constructing teaching meaning is also enhanced (Luo, 2018).

Secondly, instructors' perceptions of supportive behaviors in servant leadership, including resource provision, emotional care, and professional empowerment, could meet instructors' diverse needs and reduce the impact of external disturbances on teaching behavior. Resource support and professional empowerment could directly enhance instructors' sense of teaching competence, giving them more confidence to engage in innovative teaching; emotional care could alleviate occupational stress, providing instructors with a psychologically safe space, thereby promoting their spontaneity and independence in the teaching process (Jia et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the trust and respect organizational atmosphere created by servant leadership provided structural guarantees for instructors' professional agency. When instructors perceive the service orientation and empowerment intentions of their leaders, their subjectivity awakens, making them more inclined to view teaching as a path to self-realization rather than merely a task to execute. This cognitive shift fundamentally strengthens the intrinsic unity of teaching autonomy.

In addition, the empowering behaviors of servant leadership, through decentralization of power and participation in decision-making, directly grant instructors control over their teaching. In the process of participating in school decision-making, instructors' autonomous decision-making abilities and creativity are exercised, and the accumulation of this practical experience further translates into self-control and self-reflection in teaching contexts. They could more proactively regulate their teaching behavior and optimize teaching strategies based on reflection (Lai Yuting, 2018).

## **Conclusion**

1) The overall perceived servant leadership by instructors at Hunan International Economics University, China was at a high level.

2) The overall teaching autonomy among instructors by instructors at Hunan International Economics University, China was at a high level.

3) There were significant differences in the perceived servant leadership among instructors at Hunan International Economics University, China by gender, age, educational background, and teaching experience, while there were no significant differences based on position.

(1) There was a significant difference in the perceived servant leadership among instructors with different genders, with female instructors perceiving servant leadership significantly higher than male instructors.

(2) There was a significant difference in the perceived servant leadership among instructors with different ages, with instructors aged 41-50 and those aged 51 and above perceiving servant leadership significantly higher than instructors aged 30 and below.

(3) There was a significant difference in the perceived servant leadership among instructors with different educational backgrounds, with instructors holding a bachelor's degree or below perceiving servant leadership significantly higher than those with a master's degree or above.

(4) There were no significant differences in the perceived servant leadership among instructors with different positions.

(5) There was a significant difference in the perceived servant leadership among instructors with different teaching experience, with instructors who have worked for 11 years or more perceiving servant leadership significantly higher than those who have worked for 5 years or less and those with 6-10 years of experience.

4) There were significant differences in the teaching autonomy among instructors at Hunan International Economics University, China by gender, age, position, and teaching experience, while there were no significant differences based on educational background.

(1) There was a significant difference in teaching autonomy among instructors of different genders, with female instructors having significantly higher teaching autonomy than male instructors.

(2) There was a significant difference in teaching autonomy among instructors of different ages. Instructors aged 51 and above have significantly higher teaching autonomy than those aged 30 and below, as well as those aged 31-40. Instructors aged 31-40 also have significantly higher teaching autonomy than those aged 30 and below.

(3) The difference in teaching autonomy among instructors with different educational backgrounds at Hunan International Economics University, China was not significant.

(4) There was a significant difference in teaching autonomy among instructors with different positions at Hunan International Economics University, China, with professors/associate professors having significantly higher teaching autonomy than lecturers/teaching assistants.

(5) There was a significant difference in teaching autonomy among instructors with different teaching experience, with instructors who have worked for 11 years or more having significantly higher teaching autonomy than those who have worked for 5 years or less and those with 6-10 years of experience, while instructors with 6-10 years of experience have significantly higher teaching autonomy than those with 5 years or less.

5) There was a significant positive correlation between the perceived servant leadership and teaching autonomy among instructors at Hunan International Economics University, China.

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