

Exploring Servant Leadership and Intrapreneurship with Organizational Antecedents in Indonesian Schools

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Article Info

Article history:

Submission July 23, 2024
Revised September 25, 2024
Accepted November 13, 2024
Published November 18, 2024

Keywords:

Servant Leadership
Intrapreneurship
Indonesia



ABSTRACT

The applicability of the servant leadership concept is still growing, and researchers are currently exploring model development. On the other hand, since organizations need to innovate in order to adapt proactively to change and ensure sustainability, intrapreneurship becomes particularly important for the development of any organization, whether it is a business or a non-profit. Numerous studies have indicated that servant leadership can stimulate creative and innovative behaviors, which are essential aspects of intrapreneurship. However, the existing literature on servant leadership primarily focuses on leader characteristics, with limited knowledge about other influencing factors. This research uniquely explores organizational antecedents, addressing gaps in how servant leadership fosters intrapreneurship. **This study aims to explore** and identify the antecedents of servant leadership beyond individual characteristics. Participants in this study include principals from various Indonesian private schools. We conducted thorough interviews to gather data, and the transcripts from these interviews were meticulously analyzed to identify key themes. **The interview data** were analyzed using thematic coding, wherein recurring patterns and themes were identified through a systematic, iterative process. **The analysis** followed a six-phase framework for thematic analysis, starting with familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and finally producing the report. **According to the results**, potential variables for future research in servant leadership and intrapreneurship models include organizational vision and mission, satisfaction with compensation, serving culture, and the role model of the manager.

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34306/att.v6i3.467>

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the current complex business environment of the 21st century or high VUCA environment (Volatile, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity), organizations are recognizing the need for a fresh and more effective approach to leadership. In today VUCA environment, leaders are increasingly focusing on building agile, human-centered, and digitally empowered organizations that address the needs of diverse stakeholders (customers, employees, suppliers, and communities, in addition to investors). Leaders face significant challenges in the digital age marked by the rapid development of information technology. Organizations require new skills

and abilities to navigate disruptive business environments, evolving workforces, and emerging work methods.

In the digital age, servant leadership proves essential and flexible. The lead author has extensive experience in researching leadership theories and organizational behavior, particularly in the context of educational management, providing a strong foundation for examining servant leadership role in fostering intrapreneurship. Providing organizations with a dynamic framework to thrive amidst rapid technological advancements [1, 2]. Servant leaders not only cultivate an atmosphere that encourages innovation and flexibility but also empower their teams to leverage the entire range of technological capabilities at their disposal. Servant leaders use empathy, compassion, vulnerability, thankfulness, self-awareness, and self-care by expressing gratitude and offering support, they foster a psychologically safe environment where their staff can work together, come up with new ideas, and bring up issues as needed. This involves improving people well-being via stronger interpersonal relationships and applauding small victories along the path to major accomplishments. Evidence suggests that these conditions facilitate optimal team performance [3]. There is an urgent demand for servant leaders who prioritize the well-being and development of their employees. These leaders place a high emphasis on fostering the growth and welfare of their followers. They exhibit qualities such as compassion, trustworthiness, and patience, which are deemed crucial in the post-pandemic world [4]. Leaders who exhibit servant leadership qualities successfully able to navigate their employees and organizations through any crisis, exhibiting moral fortitude, empathy, and channeling their energies to produce favorable results for their organizations and communities.

Another significant factor that can provide organizations with a competitive edge is intrapreneurship [5, 6]. Studies reveal that companies that prioritize intrapreneurship are typically more resilient and prosperous than their competitors. Without a doubt, intrapreneurship helps businesses achieve sustained growth, productivity gains, and financial performance. A company capacity to foster an intrapreneurial culture, create productive work connections, and offer appropriate incentives gives rise to three main managerial problems. Support from managers is essential for fostering an entrepreneurial culture inside a company. By utilizing skilled workers and promoting intrapreneurial projects that spur innovation, this culture aids in the development of the firm [7]. Servant leadership is a crucial element that drives innovative initiatives and entrepreneurship within an organization [8].

The school leadership in Indonesia is in the early stages of development and requires additional enhancements. One of the three primary challenges identified in Indonesian school leadership is the insufficient ability to effectively lead and manage schools. To address this issue, it is recommended to conduct further research on the specific issue of school leadership in Indonesia, with a focus on establishing training centers for principals. Consequently, it is crucial for educational stakeholders, policymakers, and scholars to have a comprehensive understanding of the current state of school leadership in Indonesia [9]. While servant leadership is applicable across diverse organizations, it is not tied exclusively to any specific religious foundation. Nevertheless, earlier research has connected the concept of servant leadership to Christianity [10].

The Christian Education Council in Indonesia in collaboration with the Bilangan Research Center, discovered that 40% of Christian schools in Indonesia faced a decline, while 30% experienced stagnation [11]. Schools encountering challenges in competition typically grapple with three primary issues: inadequate core competence, marked by less qualified teachers and leadership; a negative reputation for Christian schools; a decline in student enrollment numbers. These occurrences validate the findings of [12], highlighting that organizations consistently encounter challenges in surviving and sustaining themselves in the market, underscoring the critical importance of innovation for their development. One of the most important concerns of every private school is the leadership.

Discovered that servant leadership is linked to four intrapreneurial qualities: creativity, innovation capital, trust, and extra-role behaviors [13]. Organizations aiming to boost intrapreneurial output should adopt a "bottom-up" structure to encourage "unplanned innovation" and subsequently focus on enhancing "employees" "innovation implementation behavior". Strategically adopting a servant leadership style helps strengthen interpersonal relationships within the organization and externally in society. Servant leadership provides numerous benefits for employees, the organization, and society, potentially leading to a consistent and comprehensive transformation in organizational culture. In other words, servant leadership enhances an organization competencies in creativity and innovation.

An empirical study by [8] found significant relationships between servant leadership and intrapreneurship in service-providing organizations. Culture plays a crucial role in these organizations. When members become familiar with the organizational culture, they interpret events similarly, viewing it as a unifying force that

creates cognitive and emotional connections among themselves and others within and outside the organization. By exhibiting servant leadership traits, managers foster an atmosphere of trust, cooperation, and collaboration. Developing intrapreneurship necessitates a culture founded on shared goals. Furthermore, [14] found that teacher servant leadership can stimulate creativity among teachers in vocational high schools in Indonesia. Additionally, school leaders are responsible for shaping educational policies. [15] discovered that inclusive education policies, which encompass curriculum support for inclusivity and teacher training, also help improve the institution image.

The factors that contribute to a leader behavior typically include organizational and team culture, policies, influences from higher authorities, as well as the leader personality and demographics. However, the existing literature on servant leadership primarily focuses on leader characteristics. While previous studies have extensively explored the individual traits of servant leaders, this research adds a novel perspective by examining how organizational culture and role modeling act as antecedents of servant leadership. This study uniquely contributes to the literature by examining how organizational factors, such as vision alignment and compensation, act as antecedents of servant leadership, a perspective not extensively covered in previous research. These factors are underexplored in the current literature, particularly in the context of fostering intrapreneurship [16]. While existing research, such as that by [16], primarily concentrates on individual servant leader traits, this study differs by exploring organizational antecedents of servant leadership, including vision and mission alignment, compensation, and role modeling. These organizational factors have not been extensively explored in prior studies, thus providing a fresh perspective on how servant leadership can foster intrapreneurship in educational settings. Hence, there are significant gaps in our understanding of the conditions that give rise to servant leadership, both in theory and empirical data. Furthermore, as many writers have noted [17], servant leadership is crucial in both stable and crisis situations. This underscores the necessity of looking into these contributing factors. Since servant leadership and intrapreneurship are regarded as crucial in organizations, the following urgent question arises: How can organizations cultivate a servant leadership environment that, in turn, encourages an intrapreneurial culture in service-oriented settings?.

This study wants to answer the research question: What are the antecedents (from the organizational side or outside leader characteristics) of servant leadership? This research aims to investigate and pinpoint the factors contributing to servant leadership beyond individual traits within service-oriented organizations. This study bridges the gap between leadership and innovation theory by demonstrating how servant leadership fosters an intrapreneurial culture within organizations. Specifically, it addresses the theoretical gap regarding the role of organizational antecedents in stimulating innovation and creativity, which has been largely overlooked. Recent studies from Southeast Asia highlight the growing importance of servant leadership in fostering innovation, particularly in service-oriented industries. These findings align with our study exploration of the role of leadership in driving intrapreneurship in educational settings. This study bridges the gap between leadership and innovation theory by demonstrating how servant leadership fosters an intrapreneurial culture within organizations. Specifically, it addresses the theoretical gap regarding the role of organizational antecedents in stimulating innovation and creativity, which has been largely overlooked.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review explores key concepts that contribute to organizational growth and innovation. It begins with an analysis of servant leadership and its principles, followed by a discussion on intrapreneurship as a driver of internal innovation. Finally, it examines the relationship between servant leadership, creativity, and intrapreneurship in fostering resilient and dynamic organizations.

2.1. Servant Leadership

According to [18], a servant leader is someone who prioritizes service, beginning with an innate desire to serve and placing the utmost importance on this commitment to serving others. This decision, made consciously, inspires and motivates others to lead as well. The difference is evident in the attitude of a servant leader, who is always confident in fulfilling the highest needs of others. Prioritizing the role of a servant before that of a leader is the essence of a servant-leader (servant as leader), distinct from someone who is a leader first (leader as a servant). Thus, servant-first and leader-first represent two highly different approaches. Servant leadership emphasizes core personal characteristics and beliefs rather than specific leadership techniques. Recent works [19], emphasize the growing importance of servant leadership in fostering innovation and building resilient organizations. Greenleaf writings identify ten major attributes of servant leadership [18]: listening and

understanding; empathy and acceptance; commitment to the growth of people; foresight; awareness; persuasion; conceptualizing; healing and serving; stewardship; and building community. Servant leadership uniquely emphasizes prioritizing the needs of others, fostering team development, and encouraging innovation through collaboration.

Servant leaders avoid both the controlling tactics of some leadership styles and the hands-off approach of others in favor of actively supporting and serving their staff in order to establish their authority and influence. What distinguishes servant leadership is its focus on putting others needs ahead of one own, developing influence via sincere persuasion and authenticity, and encouraging personal development. Through compassionate leadership, servant leaders distribute authority and inspire greatness in their team members. Authenticity plays a central role in servant leadership, as these leaders continuously strive to cultivate genuine relationships with their followers.

This fosters a strong sense of cultural alignment that can be challenging to achieve in more traditional leadership styles that often neglect the importance of culture. As a result, servant leadership contributes to a positive employee experience, high levels of engagement, and overall employee satisfaction. These guiding principles set servant leadership apart from other approaches, especially in the way it approaches decision-making (taking into account long-term implications and consequences), goal setting and achievement (through the growth and development of others), and authority and influence (based on trust, compassion, and persuasion). [16] defines the definition of servant leadership as follows:

- Other-oriented approach to leadership (motive).
- Manifested through one-on-one prioritizing of followers individual needs and interests (mode).
- An outward reorienting of their concern for self towards concern for others within the organization and the larger community (mindset).

Research on servant leadership is also evident in many fields, such as education [20], nursing [21], the non-profit sector [22], tourism [22], and in youth sectors [20]. Servant leadership principles are being applied in significant ways in a half dozen major areas, servant leadership crosses all boundaries and is being applied by a wide variety of people working with for profit businesses and not-for profit businesses; and churches, universities, health care organizations, and foundations [18]. Research consistently shows positive relationships between servant leadership and highly valued outcomes at various levels. This covers group outcomes like team potential and team performance, organizational outcomes like customer satisfaction and return on investment, and individual outcomes like Leader-Member Exchange (LMX), creativity, job performance, and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB). These findings strongly suggest that practicing servant leadership is suitable for organizations aiming for long-term growth that benefits all stakeholders, rather than focusing solely on short-term gains for shareholders. Servant leaders indirectly influence organizational outcomes by focusing on facilitating and supporting their followers, helping them reach their full potential, and instilling a culture of serving others, including both customers and colleagues [16].

2.2. Intrapreneurship

Intrapreneurship is described as a process where individuals within an organization engage in new activities and deviate from routines to explore new opportunities [23]. It can also be seen as "bottom-up proactive work-related initiatives by individual employees that drive product development or improvement and/or market penetration". In terms of processes involving employees and their behaviors, intrapreneurial employees frequently generate and pursue innovative ideas and information. Sharing these ideas and information among peers enhances the organization competitiveness and innovation [24] distinguish between entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship. Entrepreneurship involves entrepreneurs taking the risk to create and manage an independent company. In contrast, intrapreneurship occurs when members of a company identify and exploit ideas within their organization [25]. Therefore, intrapreneurship is seen as entrepreneurial activity conducted within existing organizations [26], where individuals within the organization actively seek opportunities [23] by introducing novel initiatives [25].

Identify two interconnected sets of factors influencing intrapreneurship: the external environment and internal organizational characteristics [26]. Scholars including [26–28] assert that environmental factors such as dynamism, technological opportunities, industry growth, and demand for new products significantly impact intrapreneurship. [29, 30] find that autonomy and rewards play positive roles in fostering intrapreneurship. [31]

emphasize the influence of social norms and employee traits on intrapreneurship. [32] indicate that job design affects intrapreneurial activities, while [33] highlight the importance of proactive work behaviors in promoting intrapreneurship. One of the primary outcomes of intrapreneurship is improved company performance, enables the growth of smaller firms, enhance the performance of companies operating in challenging environments [34]. The concept of intrapreneurship offers two main benefits:

- Using intrapreneurship to foster innovation and ensure business sustainability.
- Employing intrapreneurship as a guiding principle for businesses to adapt to environmental changes and improve their performance.

Intrapreneurship revolutionizes how businesses approach innovation and sustainability, influencing both the businesses themselves and their employees.

2.3. Servant leadership, Creativity, and Intrapreneurship

Servant leaders recognize the importance of providing resources and support to their followers to enhance their productivity and deliver value to customers [35]. In the current era of rapid technological advancement, organizations confront the dual challenge of embracing the digital age while remaining true to servant leadership values. Leading in the digital age demands a shift in mindset and the adoption of new leadership practices [36]. Leaders must demonstrate transformational and strategic-oriented behaviors alongside servant leadership to successfully navigate the digital landscape. According to [13], intrapreneurship requires an atmosphere in which staff members feel free to express their opinions, believe that their efforts will be valued rather than disregarded, and know that there are no prejudices present in the workplace. Studies reveal that when workers have a strong sense of kinship with the company often through their direct supervisors they are more likely to exceed their contractual responsibilities. This relationship is greatly enhanced by servant leadership, which pushes followers to never give up on their objectives and results in high emotional wellbeing among team members [25, 37]. Employees are more likely to behave similarly toward their coworkers and the company when they witness supporting behaviors from their leaders, such as direction, loyalty, and moral behavior. Successful intrapreneurship also hinges on a collaborative workspace where colleagues willingly assist each other, opinions flow freely, and rejections or criticisms are transformed into constructive feedback. Here, the focus shifts from meeting deadlines to delivering the best possible results. Such behaviors contribute to creating a healthy work environment where creativity, productivity, and innovation thrive [13]. Employees intrapreneurial behaviors are now crucial for organizational performance. Key dimensions such as creativity/innovation, proactivity, risk-taking, opportunity recognition/exploitation, and internal/external networking underscore the importance of intrapreneurship.

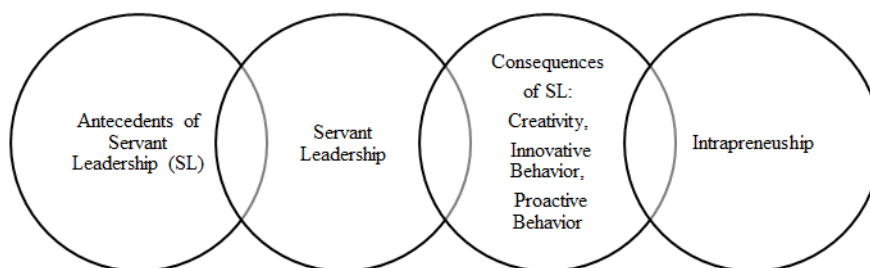


Figure 1. Relationship between Servant Leadership and Intrapreneurship

The determinants of intrapreneurial behavior include specific skills, self-perception of capabilities, personal knowledge, past experiences, relationship with the organization, motivation, satisfaction, and intention [38]. Risk-taking involves a willingness to embrace change. [39] discovered that enhancing psychological capital and increasing lecturer work engagement can help lecturers accept and adopt organizational changes. Servant leadership plays a crucial role in boosting both psychological capital and work engagement [40, 41]. According to social learning theory [42, 43], employees are likely to emulate the attitudes, values, and behaviors of leaders they perceive as credible role models within their organization. Servant leaders often fulfill

this role because they demonstrate altruistic behavior and a genuine commitment to serving others without expecting reciprocation [44, 45]. This process of role modeling explains how servant leadership influences performance [46], creativity, innovative behavior [23], knowledge sharing [47], and proactive behavior [48]. By cultivating supportive team atmospheres like a service-oriented climate [49] and an environment conducive to knowledge sharing [23], servant leadership has been shown in team research to enhance team effectiveness, promote team psychological safety [50], and foster team-level creativity and innovation. Furthermore, servant leaders who prioritize qualities such as justice, empathy, motivation, humility, and knowledge, and who exhibit creativity and entrepreneurship, evolve into social entrepreneurs. Leaders and entrepreneurs commonly share traits like innovation, vision, personal initiative, and willingness to take risks. As illustrated in figure 1, fostering intrapreneurship requires organizations to cultivate creativity, innovative behavior, and proactive behavior (including risk-taking and readiness to change/adaptability). To achieve this, a specific type of leadership servant leadership is required to promote these traits. Therefore, to establish a servant leadership environment and develop servant leaders, the appropriate antecedents are essential.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative methods approach (as shown in Figure 2), utilizing in-depth interviews to collect data. The qualitative approach was selected for its ability to explore the nuanced organizational antecedents of servant leadership, which are best understood through rich, descriptive data. This method provides a comprehensive understanding of complex dynamics that quantitative methods might overlook. According to QS Rankings, Bandung ranks as the top city for student life in Indonesia, making it an ideal location for this research. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten principals from private schools in Bandung, covering kindergarten to high school (K-12) levels.

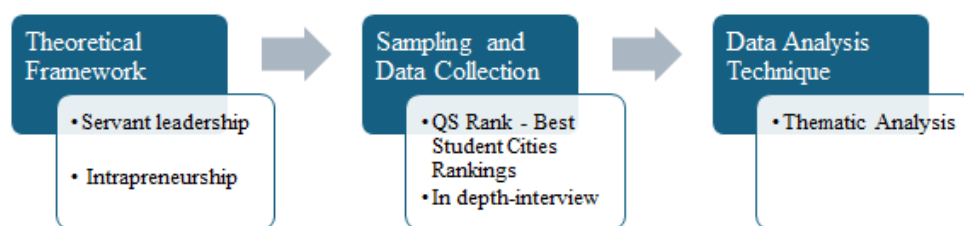


Figure 2. Research Methods

Both in-person and online interviews were carried out to accommodate logistical constraints. The interview transcripts were meticulously analyzed using thematic coding, following a six-phase framework: familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. This systematic process ensured methodological rigor and accuracy in identifying patterns. While this study is qualitative, future research could benefit from a mixed-methods approach, incorporating quantitative measures such as innovation performance and employee engagement to provide broader insights into how servant leadership influences intrapreneurial outcomes [51–54]. Such a combination of qualitative depth and quantitative breadth could significantly enrich the understanding of the relationship between servant leadership and innovation.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The informants consist of two male and nine females, their ages between 30–55 years old, and their tenures as principals between 1–10 years. The number of students at each school is between 50–300 students. Moreover, the number of teachers and staff at each school is between 20–50 people.

Based on table 1, the following are the themes that have been identified become antecedents of servant leadership in servant leadership models: role modelling from the leader/manager/supervisor, serving culture, trust in leader, compensation, follower self interest, organizational culture, and the organization vision and mission statements. Most of the themes align with research on follower servant behavior and servant leadership [23]. Compensation and organizational vision and mission could potentially serve as novel variables in servant leadership models.

Table 1. The Antecedents Factors of Servant Leadership Themes

Questions	Sample of Answers	Themes
Have you heard the servant leadership concept? In your opinion, what is servant leader?	All of respondents have heard the terminology “servant leadership”. All respondents answered the similar essence about servant leadership, which is	Servant Leadership/Servant Leader
What are your organizational vision and mission?	All the vision and mission contain “serving” wording or “serving value”	Alignment vision and mission with serving value
What are your organizational values and culture?	One of their organizational values relates to “serving value/culture”	Serving Culture
What challenges have you ever faced in implementing organizational value among your subordinates/organization?	“...how to make bonding with other organizational members, especially the new comers...” “...consistently being a good example for others...”	Serving Culture; Follower Self Interest
Are there similarities between your personal value with organizational value where you are in now?	All respondents identify themselves have similar value with their organization	Follower Self Interest; Serving self efficacy
If the compensation level is low (below minimum wages), is it possible to nurture and foster servant leadership in organization?	All respondents think fair and good compensation is crucial factor to boost servant-hood mindset “... Based on Maslow motivation theory, if impossible to actualize ourselves without our physical needs are satisfied first...” “...the very limited financial resources hinders school to get more competent teachers. Good compensation will attract more candidates...”	Satisfaction of Compensation
What would you do if you have all the authorities and resources needed to foster servant leadership climate in your organization?	“...I will ask: ‘what is benefit of our you are doing?’ It is important to know the purpose of doing something...” “...the necessity of one-on-one meetings between the leader and the follower to build trust more...” “...mentorship and fellowship are important to create conducive working culture...”	Satisfaction of Compensation; Trust in Leader; Serving Culture; Serving self efficacy
Who is your role model in emulating servant leader attributes?	Daddy; Head of School; Pastor; Indonesian President	Role Model; Trust in Leader
From 0-10 (0 is the worst, 10 is the best), what score would you give for servant leadership atmosphere in your organization?	Between 7-9	Organizational Culture

On one hand, the findings have the potential to assist the scholarly community in addressing some gaps in the theoretical and practical understanding of the factors that preceded servant leadership, particularly those factors that come from the organization side. On the other hand, it is vital for organizations to have a leadership approach which is effective to navigate unanticipated challenges and situations like pandemic crises, economic downturns, and socio-political upheavals. These findings provide practitioners with important infor-

mation about how to cultivate and support an organizational atmosphere that is supportive of servant leadership. While this study focuses on edupreneurship within private schools, the findings on servant leadership impact on intrapreneurship are applicable to other contexts, such as culturalpreneurship and digitalpreneurship. These forms of preneurship also rely on creativity, innovation, and proactive behavior, which can be nurtured through servant leadership practices, making the results relevant to a wider audience.

We set a proposition that factors such as the manager role modeling, alignment of vision and mission with service-oriented values, a culture of service, self-efficacy in serving others, and satisfaction with compensation can promote servant leadership behaviors. These behaviors, in turn, may stimulate intrapreneurship by encouraging creative and innovative behavior. The significance of these findings extends to various entrepreneurial practices, where fostering an intrapreneurial culture can be critical. Servant leadership, through its emphasis on collaboration and innovation, can support organizational adaptability in competitive industries.

5. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Based on these findings, several policy recommendations are proposed:

- Create a service-oriented culture, align your company vision and mission with service values to foster a collaborative and innovative atmosphere. Policy recommendations include establishing leadership training programs emphasizing servant leadership, developing mentoring systems, and creating performance incentives linked to innovation-driven intrapreneurship. When managers model servant leadership, employees are more likely to engage in intrapreneurial activities, boosting creativity and adaptability.
- Boost engagement with fair compensation, fair pay isn't just a nice-to-have it's essential. When employees basic needs are met, they're free to focus on innovation and personal growth, leading to higher engagement and driving the organization success.
- Role models matter, leaders who walk the talk by showing empathy and commitment inspire their teams to be proactive and creative. A culture of servant leadership not only motivates employees but also encourages them to take initiative, keeping your organization ahead of the curve.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study highlights the critical role of servant leadership in addressing the challenges of the VUCA environment faced by private school leaders in Indonesia. By prioritizing others, fostering communication and collaboration, and embracing adaptability and innovation, servant leaders have demonstrated resilience and compassion. Servant leadership practices enhance team collaboration and innovation, providing actionable strategies for school leaders to address challenges in a VUCA environment. Practitioners should integrate servant leadership training into professional development programs, emphasizing role modeling and service culture alignment to foster an intrapreneurial climate. As digital challenges continue to evolve, servant leadership will remain key in creating inclusive, supportive, and innovative learning environments that encourage intrapreneurship among teachers and staff.

The study's limitations include a small sample size and focus on a single industry which may limit generalizability. Future research should explore diverse sectors and employ mixed methods approaches for broader insights. Additionally, quantitative approaches could measure specific outcomes of servant leadership on intrapreneurial initiatives such as innovation, creativity, and employee satisfaction. Variables like organizational vision, compensation, and the role of managers as role models could further expand the understanding of servant leadership and intrapreneurship.

7. DECLARATIONS

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7.2. Author Contributions

Conceptualization: RS, MM, BS and AK; Methodology: RS; Software: RS; Validation: RS; Formal Analysis: RS, MM, BS and AK; Investigation: RS, MM, BS and AK; Resources: RS; Data Curation: RS; Writing Original Draft Preparation: SS and MM; Writing Review and Editing: RS, MM, BS and AK; Visualization: RS; All authors, RS, MM, BS and AK, have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

7.3. Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

7.4. Funding

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

7.5. Declaration of Conflicting Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest, known competing financial interests, or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

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