The Role of Servant Leadership in Developing Spiritual Formation of Teachers

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ABSTRACT

Leadership is the ability of an individual who holds a position and capacity to lead. Logically, a leader who leads must have others to lead and/or who will be led. Leadership can be examined from two aspects, namely religious/spiritual leadership and secular/natural leadership. The leadership to be addressed in this research is Christian Leadership with an emphasis on Servant Leadership. The aim of this research is to explore the phenomenon of Servant Leadership and explain its impact on spiritual growth. In this case, the role of Servant Leadership to be explored is the Servant Leadership of the Principal of SMP Dian Harapan Holland Village Manado, and its impact on the spiritual growth of fresh graduate teachers as individuals or followers who are led, based on a case study conducted on an object and subject of research. The research method used is qualitative with a case study approach. From the results of this research, it was found that fresh graduate teachers with less than one year of teaching experience can see, experience, and feel the Servant Leadership of the Principal of SMP Dian Harapan Holland Village Manado, which is considered as a humble person, through relationships, interactions, and communication with the Principal. The role of the Servant Leadership of the Principal is also perceived by fresh graduate teachers as helpful in their spiritual formation through mentoring, encouragement, and spiritual activities at school.

Keywords: Leadership, Spiritual Formation

INTRODUCTION

As a Christian educational institution, the school plays a crucial role in nurturing students' spiritual growth through the introduction to God within the school community. However, the spiritual formation and growth of students are not solely the responsibility of the teachers; rather, teachers need to be role models or inspirations for the students. In this regard, teachers must first exemplify the life of a disciple of Christ. In other words, teachers need to undergo spiritual formation and demonstrate spiritual growth as an essential principle for a Christian teacher.

Spiritual growth, also known as spiritual formation, is the ongoing and qualitative development of a believer's spiritual life towards the right direction, which can be evaluated by the character of their life. Spiritual growth is an active, dynamic, and evolving process that aims to achieve Christlikeness. It doesn't happen automatically but involves a process and supporting factors. Spiritual individuals need to believe in God, know God, seek God's will, not be self-centered, search for and follow God's ways, obey God willingly, be motivated by God's love and love for others, and depend on God (Telaumbanua 2019).

As a Christian school, spiritual formation and growth are essential for every member of the school community because the spiritual growth of a Christian teacher significantly influences their role and responsibility in conveying biblical truth to students. This is not limited to teachers of Christian religious studies; it is the responsibility of every teacher at SDH HV.

Dian Harapan Holland Village Manado experiences a yearly turnover of teachers due to the dominance of reciprocal teachers. Reciprocal teachers' tenure is limited to five years, after which they will be "released," and new teachers (Fresh Graduate Teachers) will begin their reciprocal period. The turnover phenomenon at SDH HV has been occurring every year since the researcher joined SDH HV in 2016.
This turnover, mainly comprised of Fresh Graduate Teachers, automatically affects students, including their learning processes, character formation, and spiritual development. SDH HV is a Christian-based school with a vision and mission centered on Christ, so the students must be guided by Christian teachers. Teachers are believed to be crucial assets in producing quality students based on the school's vision and mission. This aligns with Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2019) that turnover impacts schools and students. Specifically, when turnover contributes to a shortage of experienced teachers, schools often respond by hiring less experienced teachers in terms of pedagogy, classroom management, and spirituality. Some teachers may not meet the school's vision and mission requirements, which can impact student learning.

In the academic year 2022/2023, SMP Dian Harapan had 7 fresh graduate teachers. Based on brief interviews conducted with these teachers, it was found that they faced challenges in adapting to the school's environment and community. It took them approximately six months to feel fully settled in the school environment and community. The same response was given by the fresh graduate teachers regarding their comfort and readiness to interact with students, especially when teaching and sharing the Word of God during class devotion. The fresh graduate teachers at SMP stated that they have not yet found suitable strategies and methods to effectively convey biblical truths.

Based on observations in the research area, it can be seen that fresh graduate teachers need to pay special attention to the spiritual formation of students. They also need to improve their ability to guide students' faith development, so that students can learn to appreciate and respect teachers, understand, and recognize boundaries between teachers and students, and perceive teachers as God's instruments in shaping their spirituality, which can impact their personality and character.

Through this problem, it can be concluded that fresh graduate teachers require spiritual formation from a leader. The ideal leadership style to address this issue is the Servant Leader, who can provide an example of serving. Servant Leadership is believed to set an example for teachers on how to provide better service to students, as teachers play a significant role in guiding students' development.

Given the Christian foundation of Dian Harapan Holland Village School, as evident in its vision and mission, Servant Leadership should center on Christ and follow Jesus' leadership based on the truth of God's Word. A Servant Leader has a role and responsibility in various aspects of their followers' growth, including spiritual formation, as a form of care from a Servant Leader. Spiritual formation is also a crucial element of individual growth in various aspects.

The research background aims to explore the role of Servant Leadership in developing the spiritual formation of SMP teachers at Dian Harapan Holland Village School in Manado. The research questions include the forms of Servant Leadership implemented by the Head of School, how the Head of School implements it as a leader, factors that hinder the spiritual formation of fresh graduate teachers, the efforts made by the Head of School to develop the spiritual formation of fresh graduate teachers, how the Head of School implements Servant Leadership in developing the spiritual formation of fresh graduate teachers, and the holistic impact of the Head of School's role as a Servant Leader on students' spiritual formation in SMP.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Principles, Characteristics, and Ethical Values of Servant Leadership

The theory of Servant Leadership was introduced by Robert K. Greenleaf in 1970. Greenleaf introduced this leadership style by coining the phrase "Servant Leadership," and this leadership style became popular (Bradley Benton Haga 2022). The term "Servant Leadership" was proposed by Robert K. Greenleaf in 1977, and he defined it as serving others holistically. Greenleaf also recognized this leadership style as visionary, combining guidance and fellowship within the community while demonstrating humility in serving others. In other words, it prioritizes the interests of others or followers over the leader's own interests. Although the term "servant" historically existed before Robert K. Greenleaf, it was not widely recognized as a specific leadership style until Greenleaf coined the phrase "Servant Leadership." Before the recognition of "Servant Leadership" by Greenleaf, the term "servant" was mostly acknowledged as part of the Judeo-Christian heritage (Bradley Benton Haga 2022).

In the practice of Christian leadership, there are basic principles that guide Christian leaders in fulfilling their leadership roles. These principles are believed to be based on the truth of the Bible, which is held and trusted by every follower of Christ. Christian Leadership is Leadership that walks in God's
agenda. Christian leadership is also a spiritual and relational matter that strengthens interpersonal relationships, especially one's relationship with God (Tung 2016). Christian leadership is founded on and developed from the source of truth believed by Christians, which is the truth of the Bible, the Word of God. Biblical spirituality is the fundamental principle of Christian Leadership. The significant difference in Christian leadership lies in its Theocentric nature, meaning centered on the LORD GOD in Jesus Christ. The principles of Christian leadership include the following: 1) Based on the truth of the Bible, 2) Exemplary, 3) Responsibility (Ngesthi, Anjaya, and Arifianto 2022).

The term "shepherd" requires thinking from the perspective of a servant leader (Blanchard 2018). Shepherding is a universal leadership principle. Blanchard and Broadwell (2019, 60) further emphasize that shepherding is a Divine Leadership principle. Smith (2005, 5) observes Robert K. Greenleaf's Servant Leadership theory, where Greenleaf emphasizes that the essence of Servant Leadership lies in personal characteristics and core beliefs above specific leadership techniques. Based on this, behavioral theorists identify ten main characteristics of Leadership that are attributes in an essay written by Greenleaf. These ten characteristic attributes of Leadership include: 1) listening, 2) empathy, 3) healing, 4) awareness, 5) persuasion, 6) conceptualization, 7) foresight, 8) stewardship, 9) commitment to the growth of people, 10) building community (C Smith, n.d.).

Another term used in Servant Leadership is Servant Leader. The implementation of this leadership style is also used in secular leadership practices. However, there are significant differences between the two, as shown in the comparison table of Christian Servant Leadership and Secular Leadership. The most essential difference lies in the underlying truth of Servant Leadership. According to Christian Leadership, Servant Leadership is based on the truth of God's Word or the Bible. In the Christian perspective, the Bible explains the model of Servant Leadership through the Gospel of Mark 10:42-45. Jesus is the model of a Servant Leader, where Jesus lived a life of service according to God's plan and will, as seen in the Gospel of Luke 22:42 (Tung 2016).

Servant Leaders outlines 3 points that illustrate the characteristics of Christian leadership based on Philippians 2:5-8. These three characteristics of Christian Leadership; Servant Leaders based on Philippians 2:5-8 are: 1) willing to lose rights (verses 5-7), 2) humility like Jesus (verses 6-8), and 3) obedience like Jesus (verse 8) (Utomo 2020). There is an explanation and perspective on the ethical values of Servant Leadership, which should ideally be applied in leadership practices, especially for Christian leaders. In the ethics of Servant Leadership, a leader must build a sense of trust among employees and between co-workers. This trust can be built through good communication and relationships, based on the truth of the Bible. In the Servant Leadership culture, fear and distrust are contrary to Christian ideals of togetherness within a community of believers or followers of Christ. Unity as one body in Christ is crucial for communities, especially in Christian communities (Nass and Kreuer 2018).

There is an explanation that in the moral ethics of Servant Leadership, seen from a Christian Leadership perspective, the purpose of God is the main foundation that clarifies the goal of God's people. Philosophically, it means that God chooses a leader for His people with a definite purpose, which is for the glory of His Kingdom. Based on the above understanding, Christian leadership is "God choosing and calling a leader through a planned, systematic, and focused process to lead His people (in this case, an institution or organization) to achieve God's goals that bring benefits for and through the leader, the led, and the surrounding environment within the community for the glory of His name." (LETS and Milla 2018).

**Spiritual Formation**

The true Christian spirituality is the existence of a person who is in right relationship with God, others, and the rest of creation. In relation to leadership, it is evident that a leader's spirituality is a key aspect that shapes their worldview in the leadership process. When individuals are in the right relationship with God, others, the created world, and themselves, it means that we can apply healthy leadership. Through this, a concern arises that the application of Christian spirituality in the context of Christian leadership needs to be implemented. Without Biblical spirituality, Christian leaders not only fail in their leadership but also in their faith. Therefore, Biblical spirituality is a component of the experiment of faith that is visible in the lives of all believers, especially a Christian leader (Belay, Hermanto, and Rivosa 2021).

Throughout the history of the Christian Church, believers have paid attention to spiritual formation. In the Acts of the Apostles, people of that time were formed through worship, service, prayer,
mentoring, conflicts, and teaching and preaching. This formation enabled them to become bold
witnesses for Christ in an unfriendly environment, known for their love and compassion that stood
against the culture (Wilhoit & Howard 2020, 5; Green 2002). There is a formulation of Spiritual
Formation through the acronym WISDOM, which stands for Wise planning, Intentionality, Scripture,

Spiritual Formation can have an impact on the way of thinking and the way of living
of individuals who undergo this process. It is stated that shaping the way of thinking and the way of living
as part of Spiritual Formation is a process to prepare someone to face and engage directly with the
external world, its reality, in various aspects. Spiritual Formation aims to shape a person's obedience to
Christ and form a life of love (Ledbetter 2018).

The Role of Servant Leadership in Spiritual Formation

The characteristics of spiritual growth in a Christian are marked by traits such as complete
reliance on the Holy Spirit, self-denial, carrying the cross, focusing on eternity, dedicating all aspects
of life to the glory of God, and perseverance in prayer. A leader who has a strong relationship with God
and personal reflection on His Word will have an impact on the application of leadership and their
relationship with others, particularly those they lead (Belay, Hermanto, and Rivosa 2021).

Thus, a significant impact of Servant Leadership experiencing spiritual growth begins with the
leader serving as an example to those they lead. A leader who undergoes spiritual growth and realizes
the essence of Spiritual Formation in Christ will understand the importance of their relationship with
God and will also implement it in their relationship with those they lead.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, a qualitative method with a case study approach is employed, where the researcher
intends to explore the role of Servant Leadership of the Principal of SDH Holland Village Manado and
its impact on the spiritual growth of teachers. The research is conducted at SMP Dian Harapan Holland
Village Manado, with the research subjects consisting of one school leader, namely the Principal of
SMP Dian Harapan Holland Village Manado, who has more than 5 years of leadership experience, and
seven Fresh Graduate Teachers in their first year of teaching.

The data collection techniques used in this study are participatory observation and interviews
using the semi-structured interview method. The research instrument is the researcher themselves as the
key instrument, along with other research subjects who are informants participating in this study. Data
analysis in this study includes data reduction, coding through three processes: open coding, axial
coding, and selective coding, as well as data source triangulation.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the concept of Servant Leadership by Greenleaf, the researcher found that this concept
aligns with the understanding of the respondents regarding Servant Leadership, which emphasizes
serving and prioritizing the interests of others. The ten characteristics of Servant Leadership as
presented by Greenleaf (1977) were also recognized by the Leader in this study, who serves as the
Servant Leader to the fresh graduate teachers.

A serving leader can also provide stimulus by raising awareness among their followers about
the correct values and self-concepts; offering clear explanations of the vision, mission, goals, and values
within the organization; and instilling confidence in their followers to further develop their capacities.
Meanwhile, a leader inspires their followers by setting a good example in terms of relationships,
communication, innovation, collaboration, and so on (Kese and Hidayat 2021).

The respondents described the leader as fulfilling the principles of a Servant Leader, as
evidenced by the application of the School's Vision and Mission, responsibility, and exemplary behavior
demonstrated by the leader. According to the fresh graduate teachers, these qualities had an impact on
their own responsibilities and spiritual growth during their approximately nine months' experience as
Christian teachers in the school.

Furthermore, the research revealed complementary characteristics (functional and
accompanying attributes) that complement the ten characteristics of Servant Leadership introduced by
Greenleaf (1977). The majority of the fresh graduate teachers expressed positive opinions about the
leader’s trustworthiness based on their interactions and communication with him. However, one of the
fresh graduate teachers had a different opinion, attributing it to a lack of personal interaction with the leader, which resulted in uncertainty regarding his trustworthiness. The researcher made assumptions about the personality of this respondent, such as whether they have trust issues, personal issues, or relational issues with the principal as their leader, affecting their trust in the principal. However, the researcher did not conduct further research on this matter to maintain the focus of the study.

Referring to the Servant Leadership of Jesus Christ as the Shepherd Leader, the research confirmed that the Servant Leadership of the Headmaster as a Shepherd Leader was influenced by his deep spirituality, inspiring the fresh graduate teachers to follow suit. From this perspective, shepherding plays an essential and significant role in Servant Leadership. A Servant Leader who shepherds should be a Christian leader who has experienced a new life, inseparable from a spiritual life centered on Jesus Christ as The True Servant Leader, which can produce fruits in their leadership that impact their followers, specifically, in this case, the Headmaster as the Servant Leader and the fresh graduate teachers as the followers who need shepherding to develop their Spiritual Formation.

Regarding the hindering factors to the spiritual formation of the fresh graduate teachers, the most dominant factor was internal factors, particularly a lack of awareness. The research suggested that the spiritual formation and growth of the fresh graduate teachers could occur through reading and reflecting on the Word of God, praying, expressing faith in their daily lives centered on Christ. This intentional and continuous process is essential and significantly impactful, not only forming but also growing, and bearing fruit, which should influence the personal lives of the fresh graduate teachers, especially as Christian teachers guiding their students, even in their teaching.

The research findings showed the viewpoint of the principal, who agreed and believed that spiritual formation and growth were essential in the lives of Christians as followers of Christ, achieved through processes based on the truth of the Word of God and centered on Christ. The principal expressed his intention to monitor the spiritual formation and growth of the fresh graduate teachers by ensuring they have an appropriate church community that can help them have communal fellowship every Sunday to develop a spiritual life in Christ.

The efforts made by the principal to assist the teachers in their spiritual formation included daily devotions and chapel, weekly KTB (Kelompok Tumbuh Bersama), mentoring by Lead Teachers for each subject group, and the Professional Growth Plan document. Among these efforts, the teachers perceived daily devotions as the most significant. The principal believed that daily devotions had a significant impact on developing the Spiritual Formation of the fresh graduate teachers. He hoped that daily devotions would not only form their spirituality but also instill in them the desire, impulse, and standard to prepare the morning devotion materials. The process of preparing the morning devotion materials using the methods of reading, digging into the Scriptures, and exposition is seen as a moment for the fresh graduate teachers to experience spiritual formation in their relationship with God.

Regarding values, character, and ethics, the most prominent aspects of Servant Leadership demonstrated by the Principal are humility. The point of humility as a Servant Leader based on Christian Leadership standards and views cannot be separated from the example of Jesus Christ as the perfect example of The True Servant Leader narrated in the Bible. Based on the truth in the Gospel of Matthew 20:26-28, the true Servant Leadership that every Christian leader can emulate is the Servant Leadership of Jesus Christ as The True Servant Leader. Based on the accounts of the fresh graduate teachers, it can be seen that the Principal is able to set an example for the fresh graduate teachers in terms of lifestyle and thinking as followers of Christ in his leadership. Some fresh graduate teachers emphasize that a leader is a role model or a reflection, so those being led look up to the leader.

This also has an impact on them in their spiritual lives, both as followers of Christ and in their roles and responsibilities as Christian teachers. Some fresh graduate teachers acknowledge that the Servant Leadership demonstrated by the Principal, seen in his lifestyle and thinking as a follower of Christ, inspires them to apply similar principles. Regarding capabilities, competencies, and the role of the Principal in his Servant Leadership, it is confirmed that the Principal is able to inspire and assist fresh graduate teachers in their Spiritual Formation, impacting students directly and indirectly through the role of the spiritually-formed teachers.
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher found that the Principal of SMP Dian Harapan not only possesses the nature of a Servant Leader, but it is evident in every characteristic of Servant Leadership manifested in his leadership. The attitude of humility is most reflected in the figure of the Principal, and it is capable of inspiring, motivating, and even encouraging. The Servant Leadership style displayed by the Principal is a form of adaptation of Christian Servant Leadership. Spiritual formation should be experienced by every teacher because students observe and emulate from their teachers. Teachers should first undergo Spiritual Formation that occurs in and through Christ so that when teachers are spiritually shaped and grow, it will have a significant impact on students.

Based on this, a continuous thread can be seen, namely the role of the Servant Leadership of the Principal in striving for the development of Spiritual Formation for teachers, especially fresh graduates, has a significant influence on them. This helps shape and equip them to become true Christian teachers who can bear fruit through their thinking and lifestyle for the students entrusted to them in school. As for the specific spiritual development programs for new teachers as an effort by the Principal as a Servant Leader in developing the Spiritual Formation of fresh graduate teachers, it is expected to strengthen their calling as Christian teachers. As a suggestion for further research, a quantitative study can be conducted to delve deeper into the current research findings regarding the role of Servant Leadership in Developing Spiritual Formation for Teachers at SMP Dian Harapan Holland Village Manado.

DAFTAR PUSTAKA


C Smith. n.d. “Greenleaf Centre for Servant-Leadership.”


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