LEADERS AND SERVANTS: ANTONYMS OR SYNONYMS?
INVESTIGATING SERVANT LEADERSHIP IN LEBANESE SCHOOLS

Norma Ghamrawi and Khalil Al-Jammal

Faculty of Education, Lebanese University

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate servant leadership within a sample of private schools in Beirut, Lebanon. For that purpose, 46 school principals and 276 teachers from 46 private schools in Beirut participated in the study. An adapted version of the Leadership Skills Inventory (LSI) (Hunter, 2004) was employed to assess the shape of the servant leadership skills of school principals through their own lens and through that of their teachers. Additionally, teachers and school principals responded to an open-ended question pertaining to servant leadership. The quantitative data thus collected was analyzed with the help of SPSS 21.0. Qualitative data generated through the open-ended question was analyzed using thematic analysis. Results indicate that some school principals enjoyed attributes of servant leaders, despite the fact that the concept of servant leadership was unknown to the majority of the participant sample. Few participants, however, suggested explanations for the term, utilizing Christian and Islamic faith. Recommendations for practice and future research are proposed.

Key Words: servant leadership- teacher satisfaction- school improvement- leadership development

Introduction

The words servant and leader have always been used as antonyms. Bringing those words together, Robert Greenleaf gave birth to the paradoxical term servant-leadership (SL) (Spears, 1998). Servant leaders lead their organizations with a special emphasis on followers, making them of prime concern to them (Patterson, 2003). They are characterized with ‘servant hearts’ that make them show care and concern for others and sacrifice their time and efforts to build and develop their subordinates (Waterman, 2011); as they view the capacity-building of their followers as ends in themselves and not only means to ends (Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008). For this reason, servant leadership has been considered to be value-laden, fostering the spirit of servant hood among individuals beyond their organizations and hence impacting communities at large (Liden et al., 2008). Thus servant leadership implies leading with a strong sense of moral purpose; a notion highly valued by Fullan (2003) who states that: “One of the great strengths one needs, especially in troubled times, is a strong sense of moral purpose” (p. 19).
The literature of leadership is loaded with accentuates pertaining to its key role in the establishment of any success within organizations (Douglas & Fredendall, 2004; Gupta, et al., 2005; Moreno, Morales, & Montes, 2005; Politis, 2003; Ghamrawi & Al-Jammal, 2013). Servant leadership has been underscored additionally because of the research finding that suggest that followers tend to respond well to servant leaders because they view them trustworthy individuals (Pekerti and Sendjaya, 2010). Servant leaders have been viewed in the literature as being influential in a non-traditional manner, allowing them to motivate followers to act as risk-takers and hence contribute to organizational growth (Russel & Stone, 2002). In addition, servant-led organization has been recognized by Hamilton (2008) to possess the following characteristics: (1) mission and value focus; (2) creativity and innovation; (3) responsiveness and flexibility; (4) commitment to both internal and external service; (5) respect for employees; employee loyalty; and (6) celebration of diversity. Likewise, Spears (1998) identified ten characteristics of servant-leadership: (1) listening, (2) empathy, (3) healing, (4) awareness, (5) persuasion, (6) conceptualization, (7) foresight, (8) stewardship, (9) commitment to the growth of others, and (10) building community.

However, despite the fact that servant leadership has been related to successful leadership practices and organizational development according to the literature cited above, the body of research internationally is still very small (Crippen, 2005). This study aims at investigating servant leadership within the Lebanese context. It aims to contribute to the body of the existing international literature and at the same time providing stakeholders, policy-makers and practitioners within the Lebanese context with data-based information about the investigated concept.

Purpose of the Study

Positive school culture has been considered by Deal and Peterson (2009) as premises for school improvement. The realization of such cultures and their nourishment has been attributed primarily to school leaders (Hebert, 2006). This could be established by creating a shared vision within the school (Deal & Peterson, 2009; Salazar, 2008). Besides, they are people-oriented who build effective relationships in their environments utilizing strong communication skills (Boreen, Johnson, Niday, & Potts, 2009; Catano, Richard and Stronge, 2008). By doing so, school leaders act out as transformational leaders (2007) characterized with high-morale followers (Guerrero & Rowe, 2011; Yukl, 2009).

Transformational leadership entails four major aspects including: (1) individualized consideration or the ability to act as a mentor or coach; (2) intellectual stimulation or the leader’s ability to be a creative risk-taker; (3) inspirational motivation or leaders with strong purpose; and (4) idealized influence or a leader who provides role models for high ethical behaviors (Bass & Bass, 2008). As such, servant leadership is an extension of transformational leadership, focusing in the first place on serving followers (Frick & Sipe, 2009) and making sure that their most pertinent needs are served (Blanchard, 2010).

The purpose of this study was to investigate servant leadership within a sample of private schools in Beirut, Lebanon. As this concept was never approached in any earlier study within the Lebanese context, plural empathetic understanding of the concept was the target.
Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study was guided with the following research questions:

1. What percentage of a selected sample of private school principals in Beirut, exhibit qualities of servant leadership?
2. How do school principals and teachers within private schools in Beirut conceptualize servant leadership?

Importance of the Study

The advancement of schools has been attributed to school leadership according to the literature (Kowalski, 2010). One leadership model recognized in the literature is servant leadership through which school leaders “distance [themselves] from using power, influence and position to serve self, and instead gravitating to a position where these instruments are used to empower, enable and encourage those who are within one’s circle of influence” (Rude, 2003 in Nwogu, 2004, p.2). Servant leaders invest in trusting relationships within their contexts and focus on followers before focusing on organizational objectives (Stone, Russell & Patterson, 2004). They believe that by doing so, the latter is guaranteed as a bi-product (Stone et al., 2004).

As stated earlier, the body of research related to servant-leadership in educational organizations is small (Crippen, 2005). The literature of servant leadership springs mainly from the business sector (Autry, 2001; Block, 1993; Bennis & Goldsmith, 1997; De Pree, 1992; Pinchot, 1998; Senge, 1990; and Sturnick, 1998). Recently, some dissertation research went beyond the theoretical development of the model focusing empirically on servant leadership. Examples include the works of Patterson (2003), Bryant (2003), Nelson (2003), and Smith (2003) and others. In addition, studies have been criticized for lack of support from "published, well designed, empirical research" (Northouse, 1997, p.245) and its reliance on examples that are mostly "anecdotal in nature" (Northouse, 1997, p. 245).

This study addresses the notion of servant leadership empirically and aims at contributing to the building up of its literature. Moreover, as this concept has never been addressed earlier within the Lebanese educational context; this study introduces it via robust and data-based information. It is of great benefit to stakeholders, policy-makers and practitioners within the Lebanese context who are interested in school improvement matters.

Review of Literature

Servant Leadership

Leadership requires the provision of support to subordinates to realize and expand their potential (Liden et. al., 2000). Servant leadership is a leadership model that provides sustenance for employees to develop their potentials in the areas of task effectiveness, community stewardship, self-motivation, and future leadership capabilities (Liden et.al., 2008). It positions prominence on the holistic development of followers including, strong follower-centric, altruistic, moral/ethical, and spiritual
values (Smith et al., 2004); utilizing relational power that facilitates post-conventional moral reasoning and spiritual considerations in others (Pekerti and Sendjaya, 2010).

**Characteristics of Effective Servant Leaders**

Based on the works of several authors, effective servant leaders enjoy some common characteristics: (1) They are equipped with the ability to see when new things are not working and when new things are required; (2) They stay ahead of the game. They are able to foresee issues before they arise with customers, society, and the world; (3) They have a set of attributes that both male and female share; (4) They have a strong sense of purpose that they articulate clearly to all stakeholders; (5) They have a strong sense of purpose that they articulate clearly to all stakeholders; (5) They are caring and are trustworthy individuals; (6) They are communicative and trustful; (7) They continually seek feedback from the stakeholders who they serve; (8) They create a vision with meaning that actively involves stakeholders and reward those who meet the criterion of the vision; (9) They are abreast technology; (10) They can lead small and large organizations; (11) They make federations of organizations who combine the best traits of large and small organizations (Greenleaf 1997; Lawrence & Spears, 2002; Frick & Sipe, 2009; Prosser, 2010; French, Rayner, Rees, & Rumbles, 2011; Laine, Lasagna, & Behrstock-Sherratt, 2011).

Spears (2012) identified ten hierarchal characteristics of servant-leadership: (1) listening, (2) empathy, (3) healing, (4) awareness, (5) persuasion, (6) conceptualization, (7) foresight, (8) stewardship, (9) commitment to the growth of others, and (10) building community.

In other words, servant leaders act out as effective listeners, be able to put themselves in the shoes of those to whom they listen to, and provide the support needed to heal them. Throughout that, servant leaders remain aware of their direction and do not lose track of it. Because of their inner direction, they enjoy the ability to see things others may not be able to see. They convince their followers without practicing coercion on them. In addition, they can dream big and portray those dreams to their followers. Besides, they show strong commitment to the professional growth of their followers.
not as means to ends but rather as ends. They are accountable and share control. Finally, based on all the previous features, servant leaders succeed in bringing sustainable changes within their communities that embrace trust and commitment to collaboration and growth.

**Servant Leadership and Teachers’ Satisfaction**

Effective leadership is a central feature of operative schools (Al-Jammal & Ghamrawi, 2013; Ghamrawi, 2010; 2011). It has been considered as a significant predictor of teacher satisfaction and a guarantee of teacher retention (Ghamrawi & Al-Jammal, 2013; Tickle, 2008). It can also warrant teacher commitment to schools (Behrstock-Sherratt et al., 2011). Unfortunately, traditional schooling has put emphasis on management rather than on leadership (Senge, 2005; Al-Jammal & Ghamrawi, 2013). Leadership that inaugurates trust in subordinates constitutes the fulcrum for upgrading their effectiveness (Ghamrawi, 2011).

Given the above, then servant leadership is of great value for schools as its premise is the establishment of trusting relationships in staff (Ferch & Spears, 2011; Kiang & Lian, 2011; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010; Sergiovanni, 2006). In reality, servant leaders have been recognized as ones who are able to provide continuous improvement in the organization (Brumley, 2012). It paves the way towards opportunistic approaches to fulfilling teachers’ expectations (Tey, 2006) and ensures highest levels of trust in schools (Patterson, et al., 2004).

In other words, servant leaders are viewed as figures that are able to create positive school cultures (Autry, 2004), which possess the potential to act as robust foundations for teacher satisfaction and retention (Lawrence & Spears, 2002; Hunter, 2004).

**Methodology**

**The Sample and the Research Instrument**

Quantitative surveying was employed for the purpose of this study. An adapted version of Hunter’s (2004) Leadership Skills inventory (LSI), containing an open-ended question, was administered to 46 private schools in Beirut, Lebanon. In each school one survey was directed to the school principal and the same questionnaire was directed to their teachers. The teacher questionnaires were administered to two teachers from each level within the participating schools (Elementary, Middle and Secondary).

All participant school principals bear an administrative experience that exceeded 10 years. Teachers participating in the study shared a commonality relating to teaching experience and certification. In fact, participating teachers were certified with a Teaching Diploma (TD) or its equivalence and had a teaching experience that exceeded 5 years. As such the sample consisted of 46 private school principals 276 teachers.

Hunter’s (2004) adapted LSI version was completed by school principals; whereby they rated their personal servant leadership skills using a Likert-scale, with anchors that included: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. According to Hunter (2004), if the school principal scores 3.4 - 4.0, then principal’s leadership is in excellent shape; in good shape, 3.0 - 3.3; 2.5 - 2.9 indicates there is a potential problem area; and 0.0 - 2.4 indicates an urgent problem area. This same questionnaire...
was also completed by teachers who validated or disproved information collected from school principals about their own servant leadership attributes.

The open-ended question included: *How do you explain the term: Servant leadership?* and was included in the principals’ and teachers’ versions of the LSI.

**Data Analysis**

Data was analyzed using SPSS 21.0 for windows. Descriptive statistics were used to describe and summarize the properties of the mass of data collected from the respondents. Means scores, standard deviations and percentages were calculated per each item of the survey instrument.

**Results and Analysis**

**Research Question 1:** What percentage of a selected sample of private school principals in Beirut, exhibit qualities of servant leadership?

Table 1 enlists survey items of Hunter (2004) as completed by school principals, along with the mean scores obtained per each item and the corresponding standard deviation. Table 2 enlists the results of data obtained from the same questionnaire completed by teachers as they describe servant leadership attributes of their school principals.

**Table 1. Servant Leadership Attributes of School Principals through their Own Lens**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I give appreciation to others.</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>.778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I engage students/parents with problems/situations as they arise.</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>1.076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I stay close to students and/or teacher activities</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>.911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I give encouragement to others</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>.563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I make clear to students/teachers what is expected</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>1.169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I am a good listener</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>1.284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I coach/counsel my students/teachers to ensure compliance</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>.841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I treat people with respect</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>.713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I am actively involved in the development of students/teachers</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>.870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I hold students/teachers accountable for set standards</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>.672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I give the credit to those who deserve it</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>1.228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I show patience and self-control with others</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>.934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I am a leader students/teachers feel confident to follow</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>1.228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I have the technical skills necessary to do the job</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>.770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I meet the legitimate needs (as opposed to wants) of others</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>1.068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>I am able to forgive mistakes and not hold grudges</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>1.158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I am someone students/teachers can trust</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>.657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>I do not engage in backstabbing others</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>.645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I give positive feedback to students/teachers</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>.539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>I do not embarrass/punish students/teachers publically</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>.606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>I set high goals for self/teachers/students</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>.766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>I have a positive attitude on the job</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>1.179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>I am sensitive to the implications of my decisions on others</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>.676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>I am a fair and consistent leader and lead by example.</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>.594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>I am not an over controlling or over domineering person</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>1.007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Both principals and teachers gave a relatively positive image about school principals’ servant leadership attributes. However, the image portrayed by school principals was more exaggerated than that offered by their teachers. Table 3 provides a comparison.

**Table 3. Comparison of Mean Scores Obtained from Teachers’ and Principals’ Surveys**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Teachers’ Lens</th>
<th>Principals’ Lens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>gives appreciation to others.</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>engages students/parents with problems/situations as they arise.</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>2.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>stays close to students and/or teacher activities</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>2.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>gives encouragement to others</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>2.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>makes clear to students/teachers what is expected</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>is a good listener</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>2.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>coaches/counsels students/teachers to ensure compliance</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>treats people with respect</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>2.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>is actively involved in the development of students/teachers</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>holds students/teachers accountable for set standards</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>2.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>gives the credit to those who deserve it.</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>2.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>shows patience and self-control with others</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>2.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>is a leader students/teachers feel confident to follow</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>has the technical skills necessary to do the job</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>2.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>meets the legitimate needs (as opposed to wants) of others</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>2.97</td>
</tr>
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<td>16</td>
<td>is able to forgive mistakes and not hold grudges</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>2.54</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>is someone students/teachers can trust.</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.15</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>does not engage in backstabbing others</td>
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<td>2.26</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>gives positive feedback to students/teachers</td>
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<td>2.55</td>
</tr>
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<td>20</td>
<td>does not embarrass/punish students/teachers publically</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>2.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Both school principals and teachers manifested that school principals scored on average more than 50% on Hunter’s (2004) servant leadership scale. The overall mean score obtained from teachers was 2.08 (52%) compared to 2.61 (65.25%) obtained from principals. Principals gave higher scores for themselves than the ones provided by their teachers about them except for 2 items: items 3 and 17. Teachers were more confident than principals that the latter were involved in activities of students and that they were well trusted by their teachers.

**Research Question 2**: How do school principals and teachers within private schools in Beirut conceptualize servant leadership?

Data collected through the open-ended question was used to respond to this research question.

**Principals’ Responses**

Responses of principals were classified as falling into the right domain of definition of servant leadership versus incorrect explanations of the concept. Results are presented in figure 1.

As figure 1 shows, 41% of principals’ responses fell into the correct category, whereby school principals considered the term to be related to serving teachers (7.2%), supporting the school community (6.5%), caring for the school community (4.2%), respecting teachers (4.2%), sacrificing for the sake of others (2.1%), equality (2.1%), trusting people in school (2.1%), prioritizing others (2.1%), adopting a value-oriented leadership (2.1%), modelling integrity with staff (2.1%) and distributing leadership.

On the other hand, incorrect responses (37.4%) included: dealing with teachers as servants (17.4%), all acting out as servants to students (11.6%), and all serving the leader (8.4%). Finally, 21.6% of principals did not give any answer to this question.
Figure 1. School Principals’ Explanations of the Concept of Servant Leadership

Teachers’ Responses

Again the responses of teachers were classified as falling into the right domain of definition of servant leadership versus incorrect explanations of the concept. Results are presented in figure 2.

As figure 2 shows, 36.6% of teachers’ responses fell into the correct category, whereby teachers considered the term to be related to serving the benefit of the school (7.2%), serving school community (6.3%), demonstrating ethical leadership by principals (6.3%), serving students (4.2%), serving teachers (2.1%), trusting teachers (2.1%), shared leadership (2.1%), democratic leadership (2.1%), embracing values (2.1%), and respecting teachers (2.1%).
On the other hand, incorrect responses (55%) included: dealing with teachers as servants (17.4%), and leaders serving their own benefit (16.8%). Finally, 8.4% of teachers did not give any answer to this question.

Interestingly, teachers and school principals whose answers fell into the correct domain of definition gave along with their answers justifications relating to Christian and Islamic faith.

Following are some of the justifications that emanated from the Christian faith:

....as Jesus said: “I have come to give my life for many”
...Faith is serving the feet of Jesus by serving others
...Jesus serves us when we serve others
... “For even the son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give life a ransom for many”
... “Here I am among you as one who serves”
... Jesus said serve one another
... Jesus said “If anyone wants to be the greatest among you, they should serve others”

On the same page, following are some of the justifications that emanated from the Islamic faith:
... Prophet Mohammad PBUH said that the one who leads is the one who serves the community
... servant leadership is the prophetic way of leading Muslims
... Prophet Mohammad Sirah PBUH is all about the leader serving his followers
... as Prophet Mohammad PBUH said that those who serve others are the ones who deserve to lead them
... Prophet Mohammad said no one deserves to be a leader of a ‘Kawm’ (community) until he serves them

Profiling Servant Leadership based on Participants’ Responses

Based on the responses of teachers and principals on the open-ended question of the questionnaire in which they attempted to illustrate the concept of servant leadership, the following profile can built.

Figure 3. Conceptualizing a Profile of Servant Leadership Using Participants’ Responses

Comparing the model of servant leadership thus generated with Spear’s (2012) model discussed earlier shows that respondents did hit several of the descriptors provided. However, the ideas that were not mentioned did not include extensions of terms that could in one way or another be set under the umbrella some of Spear’s terms. For example, humane skills and ethical leadership could be further illustrated and hence could come to match empathy, listening, persuasion, and many others.
Summary and Conclusion

This study attempted to investigate servant leadership within the Lebanese context. It aimed at distinguishing the degree school principals within a sample of private schools in Beirut, Lebanon; enjoyed the attributes of servant leaders. Besides, a model of servant leadership was built utilizing explanations of respondents of the term servant leadership. Results have shown that though principals bear magnified self-images as servant leaders as compared to the image provided about them by their teachers; it can be claimed that those principals seem to be encompassing at least half of those skills attributed to servant leaders according to the literature. This in itself is a promising starting point as it entails that the suitable ground is there and its cultivation is needed.

In fact, when school principals embrace servant leadership many improvements in schools are suggested according to the literature. “Teachers begin to believe in themselves and work to provide them [students] with the best education possible” (MacNeil & Yelvington, 2012, p. 1). Servant leadership allows principals to be more productive and move the organization milestones (Lawrence & Spears, 2002; Prosser, 2007). Successful servant leaders foster collaboration in schools (Lawrence & Spears, 2002; Prosser, 2007) and possess the capability to foresee critical issues before they arise (Lawrence & Spears, 2002; Prosser, 2007). Finally, servant leadership has been considered as a vital tool for motivating teachers and retains them (Saiyadain, 2009). All the previous benefits should raise the temptation of stakeholders and policy makers to work towards the cultivation of servant leadership in schools, especially that the ground seems to be ready for it.

Finally, respondents showed an appreciable awareness of the concept of servant leadership. They approximated to a moderate degree Spear’s (2012) descriptors of servant leadership attributes. The attribution of servant leadership to benefitting others, students, teachers, and the school community fairly dominated responses. In fact, “working to benefit others is the core idea of servant leadership” (Baron, 2010, p. 87). This, once more, entails that the stage is set for servant leadership establishment; and then serious steps should be taken towards the nourishment of leaders’ knowledge, skills and competencies of servant leadership.

Recommendations

This study suggests that school principals involved in the study exhibited some attributes that characterize servant leaders according to the literature; and that schools involved seem to have a basic understanding what servant leadership is. Based on this, it is suggested that policy-makers and stakeholders take advantage of this fact and work towards the nourishment of this concept through training and policies that frame its importance. This being the case, it will be increasingly important to clarify exactly what servant leadership is and how it works. It is more than a leadership style, it’s not only part of religious beliefs. Servant leadership is about promoting growth of every individual which leads to organizational growth.

Future research should utilize larger and more representing samples of the Lebanese context. In fact, only one governorate of Lebanon was addressed and only the private sector was investigated. It
would be useful to involve schools from other Lebanese governorates and to design a study that involves public schools.

Qualitative research methodologies could be an asset for future research as it would provide plural empathetic understanding of the concept and how it could support school improvement initiatives.

Finally, the relationships between servant leadership and concepts relating to school improvement need to be addressed. Findings could serve as driving forces to encourage policy makers and stakeholders to adopt this promising concept and work towards its nourishment.

References