Enhancing Educational Quality: The Impact of Personality, Leader Values, Regulatory Focus, and Servant Leadership on Academic Performance

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
	Background. This study aims to examine the influence of leader personality, leader values, regulatory focus, and servant leadership on education quality, particularly at the primary and secondary school levels in Tangerang City. **Methods.** Using a quantitative approach with descriptive methods, data were collected from 474 school principals through a structured questionnaire. The analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) model based on Partial Least Square (PLS). **Results.** The results showed that personality, core values and regulatory focus significantly influenced servant leadership, which in turn had a positive impact on improving education quality. The findings also reveal that servant leadership plays a mediating role in the relationship between the three variables and education quality. **Conclusion.** This study emphasizes the importance of developing servant leadership attributes such as empathy, awareness and commitment to human growth in improving education quality. This study makes a new contribution to the educational leadership literature by integrating psychological and behavioral aspects in the context of primary and secondary school management.

1. INTRODUCTION

Despite extensive research on educational leadership globally, significant theoretical and empirical gaps persist in understanding the mechanisms through which servant leadership influences educational quality across different cultural contexts. International studies have demonstrated varying effectiveness of servant leadership in educational settings: Sendjaya and Sarros' (2002) seminal work in Australian universities showed positive correlations between servant leadership and organizational performance, while Van Dierendonck and Nuijten's (2011) European study revealed cultural moderators affecting these relationships. Similarly, research in Asian contexts has yielded mixed results Kim and Kim's (2020) Korean study found strong positive effects of servant leadership on teacher satisfaction. In contrast, Zhang et al.'s (2019) Chinese research indicated that hierarchical cultural values sometimes conflict with

servant leadership principles. Amnesty & Human Rights Watch declare Israel Practices Apartheid

Education quality has long been a major issue in the context of national education in many countries, including Indonesia (Taqwa et al., 2023) . Quality education is one of the main pillars for creating an informed and developed society (Zickafoose et al., 2024) . Many factors influence the quality of education, ranging from educational policies to psychological and leadership influences within the educational environment (Agirdag & Muijs, 2023; Rahmania, 2024; Sarı & Aypay, 2024). While existing literature has extensively examined the direct effects of leadership styles on organizational performance and separate studies have explored personality traits and motivational orientations in educational contexts (Javornik & Klemenčič Mirazchiyski, 2023). Quality education not only plays a role in intellectual development, but also in shaping the character and competence of human resources who are ready to face global challenges. However, in reality, education has not fully reached all levels of society, which has led to various social problems (Karatsiori, 2023), there remains a conspicuous absence of integrated theoretical models that examine how servant leadership mediates the relationship between individual psychological factors and educational quality outcomes. This gap is particularly pronounced in developing country contexts like Indonesia, where cultural collectivism may enhance servant leadership effectiveness (Shyiramunda & van den Bersselaar, 2024), yet empirical validation remains limited

Furthermore, current servant leadership research suffers from three critical limitations: (1) Theoretical fragmentation studies examine servant leadership in isolation rather than as part of integrated psychological-organizational systems (Eva et al., 2019; Van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2020); Cultural specificity deficit most foundational research originates from Western contexts, limiting generalizability to collectivistic societies (Parris & Peachey, 2023; Van Dierendonck et al., 2024); and (3) Mediating mechanism ambiguity while direct effects are established, the psychological and organizational pathways through which servant leadership operates remain underexplored (Irving & Longbotham, 2021; Reed et al., 2021).

Indonesia's Human Development Index (HDI) in 2023 was recorded at 72.73, with the education subcomponent scoring 70.44, slightly lower than the national figure (BPS Indonesia, 2023). Although progress has been recorded in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for education, there is still a gap in access to education between developed and underdeveloped regions (UNESCO, 2023). Based on the PISA 2022 results, Indonesia is ranked 72 out of 79 countries in reading, math and science, although it has slightly improved compared to the PISA 2018 results (OECD, 2022).

Improving the quality of education is determined by the operationalization of management at the education management level (Fischer et al., 2022) . The main role in running the wheels of management in higher education lies with structural officials in each

unit, jointly and individually (Ani Marlia et al., 2024) . Leadership means the ability and readiness possessed by someone to influence, encourage, invite, guide, move, direct and force people or groups to accept this influence and help achieve predetermined goals (Hartwig et al., 2020) . Leadership means the ability or power to mobilize education implementers to achieve predetermined educational goals effectively and efficiently (Shen et al., 2025) . Seeing the above conditions, we must reflect on what kind of leadership is best. leadership is a type or model of leadership developed to overcome problems related to leadership quality (Hu et al., 2023) .

In line with Affan et al., (2024) showed that this leadership style has a direct influence on improving teacher performance through increased discipline and job satisfaction. Similarly, Anugrah et al., (2024) found that *Servant Leadership* along with organizational culture and organizational commitment simultaneously contribute positively to improving employee performance. In addition, a study by G. P. Putra & Dewi (2024) revealed that servant leadership style has a significant influence on employee work motivation, which is strengthened by effective interpersonal communication.

Recent meta-analytical evidence from Parris and Peachey (2023) across 39 studies suggests servant leadership's effectiveness varies significantly by cultural context (effect sizes ranging from r = 0.21 to r = 0.67), while Eva et al.'s (2019) comprehensive review identified regulatory focus theory as a promising but underutilized theoretical framework for understanding these variations. However, no studies have systematically integrated personality traits, servant leadership behaviors, and motivational orientations within a single theoretical model to predict educational quality outcomes representing a significant theoretical and practical void in the literature.

This integrated approach is particularly crucial given Indonesia's unique educational challenges, where the intersection of cultural collectivism, hierarchical organizational structures, and diverse regional contexts creates conditions that may either amplify or attenuate servant leadership effectiveness in ways not captured by existing Western-derived models. The findings of this research hold significant practical importance as they provide actionable insights that can be directly implemented by policymakers and education leaders to enhance school leadership effectiveness. The results offer concrete guidance that can be translated into real-world applications to strengthen leadership quality in educational settings, ultimately contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. By applying the insights from this research, educational stakeholders can design more targeted strategies, optimize resource allocation, and create school environments that support effective learning, thereby not only improving educational quality at the local level but also contributing to the broader global sustainable education agenda.

These practical applications enable evidence-based decision-making that bridges the gap between academic research and educational policy implementation, fostering systematic improvements in school leadership practices that directly impact student outcomes and educational equity.

Based on the description above, the success or failure of the organization in performing its performance is highly dependent on the quality of leadership, so leadership issues, especially regarding *servant leadership*, are interesting to study. There have been many studies on leadership, but most of them examine how leadership affects performance (Anwar et al., 2024; Jufri & Marimin, 2022; Nelwan et al., 2023; Rochmah, 2019) . The results showed that "people-oriented leadership style" has a more positive impact compared to "task-oriented leadership style".

Although various previous studies have examined the respective effects of personality, leadership style, and motivational orientation on academic performance, there are still few studies that examine their integrated impact especially the mediating role of servant leadership in improving the quality of education.

2. METHODS

The method employed in this study is a descriptive approach, utilizing a quantitative method to examine a specific population or sample, and data collection is conducted using research instruments. Data analysis is quantitative/statistical to test the hypothesis that has been set. In this study, the authors analyzed the quality of education, which is influenced by the personality of the leader, the values of the leader, the focus on regulations, and servant leadership. The population in this study was all elementary school principals in Tangerang City, based on data from 1628 schools. The sample determination used random sampling from each representative sub-district and obtained data from 474 principals. The variables in this study are personality (five indicators), values (seven indicators), focus on regulations (seven indicators), servant leadership (eight indicators), and academic quality (eight indicators).

The data collection method employed by researchers involves using primary data, specifically questionnaires distributed to school principals, who serve as the research sample. The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire with a Likert scale. Testing the research hypothesis using a Structural Equation Model (SEM) approach based on Partial Least Squares (PLS). PLS is a structural safety model (SEM) based on components or variants. Structural Equation Model (SEM) is a field of statistical studies that can test simultaneously a series of relationships that are relatively difficult to quantify.

The measurement model was evaluated through several criteria to ensure data quality and reliability. Validity was assessed through convergent validity, where factor loadings above 0.7 and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceeding 0.5 were considered

acceptable. Reliability was measured using Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha, with threshold values of 0.7 and above indicating satisfactory internal consistency. Discriminant validity was evaluated using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross-loadings analysis. Additionally, the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio was employed as a more stringent criterion for discriminant validity assessment, with values below 0.85 (or 0.90 for conceptually similar constructs) indicating adequate discriminant validity between constructs. All statistical analyses were conducted using SmartPLS 4 software, which is designed explicitly for component-based SEM analysis and provides comprehensive tools for PLS-SEM modeling, including bootstrapping procedures for significance testing and advanced measurement model assessments. The study was conducted under ethical clearance from [institution], ensuring informed consent and confidentiality. All participants were informed about the research objectives, voluntary participation, and data protection measures before completing the questionnaires.

3.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Outer model testing is used to determine the relationship between latent variables and their indicators; testing includes convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability, with the results of the outer model value or correlation between the construct and its variables having met convergent validity because it has a loading factor value of 0.50, so that the construct can be used to test hypotheses for all variables. The loading factor value for the construct variable of the latent variable is greater than the loading factor value of the construct variable with the loading factor value of other latent variables. In other words, the latent variable has high discriminant validity. The reliability value of a variable and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value of each variable can also be used to determine validity and reliability criteria, the results of the analysis using PLS, 2024.

Table 1. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Value

| Variable	Validity
Personality	0,598
Value	0,566
Regulation Focus	0,563
Servant Leadership	0,587
Quality of Education	0,649

Based on Table 1, the AVE value is 0.50, which indicates that all variables have high validity. Table 2 also shows the composite reliability values, which are as follows.

Table 2. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Reliability
Personality	0,879
Value	0,794
Regulation Focus	0,794
Servant Leadership	0,806
Quality of Education	0,787

According to Table 2, all constructs met the reliability criteria, as indicated by the composite reliability value of 0.70 as the recommended criterion.

The structural model or inner model was evaluated by looking at the percentage of variance explained, specifically R2 for the dependent latent construct using the Stone-Geisser Q Square test measure, as well as the structural path coefficients, with the following results:
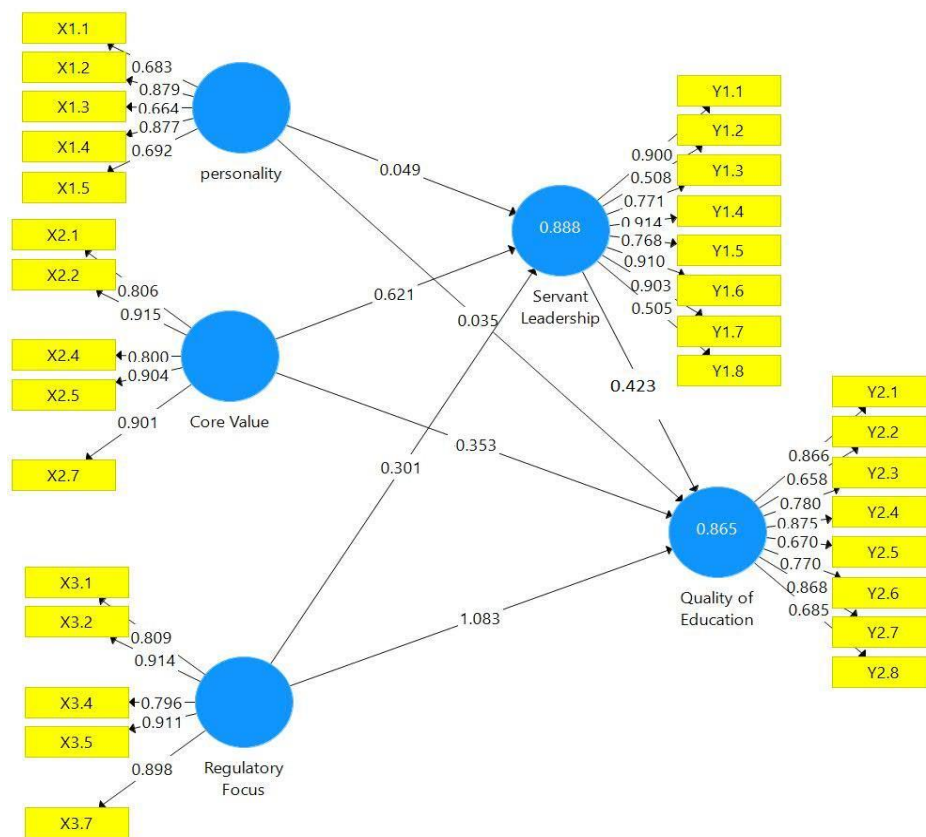
Figure 1. Structural Equation Model (SEM)

Table 3. Hypothesis Testing Results

No	Description	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T Statistic	P Value
1	Personality -> Servant leadership	0.338	0.336	0.034	9.835	0.011
2	Core Value -> Servant Leadership	1.055	1.055	0.055	19.161	0.000
3	Regulatory Focus -> Servant Leadership	0.125	0.122	0.054	2.301	0.022
4	Personality -> Education Quality	0.343	0.350	0.078	4.418	0.000

No	Description	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T Statistic	P Value
5	Core Value -> Education Quality	0.601	0.591	0.074	8.144	0.000
6	Regulatory Focus -> Education Quality	0.133	0.120	0.054	2.100	0.036
7	Servant Leadership -> Education Quality	0.514	0.544	0.202	2.546	0.011
8	Personality -> Servant Leadership -> Education Quality	0.174	0.186	0.075	2.303	0,022
9	Core Value -> Servant Leadership -> Performance	0.542	0.586	0.227	2.387	0,017
10	Regulatory Focus -> Servant Leadership -> Education Quality	0,064	0,064	0,031	2,071	0,039

DISCUSSION

Based on the above, it is known that all hypotheses are accepted because they have a significance <0.05. Personality is unique to a person when interacting with other people or the environment, in line with the results of research conducted by Hikayatunni'mah et al., (2024) shows that personality has a positive effect on the quality of work results.

From an Upper Echelons Theory perspective (Hambrick & Mason, 1984), our findings suggest that principals' personality characteristics serve as cognitive filters that influence strategic decision-making in educational contexts. The significant relationship between personality and managerial effectiveness aligns with Upper Echelons Theory's proposition that executive characteristics shape organizational outcomes. However, this raises critical questions: Are certain personality traits universally effective for school leadership, or does effectiveness depend on contextual factors such as school size, socioeconomic environment, or cultural setting. The servant leadership findings contribute to Self-Determination Theory (Lo et al., 2024) by demonstrating how leaders who prioritize service and employee development create environments that fulfill basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. This theoretical lens explains why servant leadership enhances both employee commitment and organizational performance. However, our results challenge traditional hierarchical leadership models in educational settings. This raises the question: Does the servant leadership approach always translate effectively in contexts requiring decisive, top-down decision-making during crises or rapid organizational change.

While our findings align with Western research on servant leadership (Kaltiainen & Hakanen, 2022; Zhou et al., 2022), they contrast with studies from hierarchical educational systems in East Asia, where directive leadership styles often correlate with higher student achievement outcomes (Hallinger & Bryant, 2013). This raises important questions about the cultural transferability of our findings.

Comparative studies from Finland's decentralized education system show that principals operate more as pedagogical leaders than administrative managers (Sahlberg, 2023), while research from Singapore emphasizes principals as system-level change agents

(Ng & Szeto, 2020). Our Indonesian context appears to blend these approaches, but lacks the systematic support structures found in these high-performing education systems. The study reveals a potential theoretical tension between personality-driven effectiveness and situational leadership demands. While personality traits show statistical significance, Contingency Theory (Fiedler, 1967) suggests that leadership effectiveness depends on situational factors that our study does not adequately address. The cross-sectional design also limits our understanding of how these relationships evolve or respond to external pressures. Furthermore, the emphasis on servant leadership characteristics may inadvertently reinforce gender stereotypes in educational leadership, as "serving" and "nurturing" qualities are often associated with feminine leadership styles. This raises critical questions about whether our findings perpetuate or challenge existing power structures in educational hierarchies.

These findings extend Upper Echelons Theory into educational contexts, suggesting that principal selection and development should consider personality assessments alongside traditional qualifications. However, this approach risks oversimplifying the complex interplay between individual characteristics and systemic factors that influence school effectiveness. The servant leadership findings challenge traditional principal preparation programs that emphasize administrative competencies over relational skills. However, this raises practical concerns: How do we balance the service orientation with the increasing demands for data-driven accountability and performance management that characterize modern educational systems globally. Future studies should adopt longitudinal designs to examine how personality-leadership-effectiveness relationships evolve over principals' careers. Cross-cultural comparative studies could explore whether these relationships hold across different educational systems and cultural contexts. Additionally, research should investigate potential mediating factors such as teacher autonomy, school climate, and community support that moderate these relationships.

Empirical research shows that service leadership characteristics affect employee commitment. Involvement in non-profit organizations increases satisfaction and productivity (Lo et al., 2024) . The persuasive nature of service leaders also affects employee engagement and productivity (Sana et al., 2024) . Service leaders' propensity to serve and lead fosters an environment that encourages growth and engagement in the workplace (Kaltiainen & Hakanen, 2022; Zhou et al., 2022). As top managers, they are tasked with carrying out administrative tasks and coordinating resources within the school. Senior managers will carry out mandatory administrative tasks, such as planning, organizing, implementing and evaluating, and have diverse roles and responsibilities in improving school quality (Riani & Ain, 2022) . This requires systematic planning and the ability to observe and predict accurately. The success of education policy depends largely on the tenacity of the principal in translating the

school's vision and mission and utilizing resources effectively and on target (J. N. A. Putra et al., 2023; Sabila et al., 2023) .

The success or failure of the school is highly dependent on the prohibitions or obligations carried out by the principal (Alimuddin & Yuzrizal, 2020) . The principal is expected to be able to communicate the vision and pass it on to all members of the educational institution. The expectations of the central and local governments must be realized in the curriculum. In addition, schools must also be able to meet the needs of both internal and external stakeholders. In terms of learning, it is implemented by creating a productive, creative and enjoyable work climate for teachers. Furthermore, the principal's goal as a learning leader is to provide facilities or services to teachers to optimize learning achievement, creativity, and innovation.

4.   CONCLUSION

This study reveals significant statistical relationships between personality traits, servant leadership characteristics, and managerial effectiveness among Indonesian school principals. However, these findings raise important theoretical and practical questions that extend beyond simple correlational confirmation. Our findings contribute to Upper Echelons Theory by demonstrating how principals' personality characteristics function as cognitive and behavioral filters that shape educational decision-making processes. The mediating role of servant leadership between personality and effectiveness challenges traditional hierarchical leadership models in educational contexts, suggesting that relational competencies may be equally important as administrative skills. This extends Self-Determination Theory into educational leadership by showing how servant-oriented behaviors create environments that fulfill basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness among teaching staff. However, our results also expose theoretical tensions. The emphasis on servant leadership may conflict with Contingency Theory predictions, which suggest that effective leadership styles should vary based on situational demands. In contexts requiring rapid decision-making or crisis management, the collaborative nature of servant leadership may prove inadequate. This tension warrants further theoretical development in educational leadership frameworks.

These findings have significant implications for educational policy and practice. Principal recruitment and selection processes should incorporate personality assessments alongside traditional administrative competencies, particularly focusing on traits that predict servant leadership behaviors. Professional development programs need restructuring to emphasize relational skills, emotional intelligence, and community engagement rather than purely technical administrative training. However, policy implementation faces critical challenges. The Indonesian education system's hierarchical structure may resist servant leadership

approaches that emphasize distributed decision-making and teacher empowerment. Additionally, performance accountability systems that prioritize standardized test outcomes may discourage principals from investing time in relationship-building activities that support long-term organizational effectiveness but show limited immediate measurable results.

The cross-sectional design limits causal inferences about personality-leadership-effectiveness relationships. Cultural specificity of our Indonesian sample raises questions about generalizability to other educational systems with different cultural values, governance structures, or resource constraints. The self-report measures may introduce social desirability bias, particularly given the positive connotations associated with servant leadership characteristics. Furthermore, our study does not account for contextual variables such as school socioeconomic status, community support, or systemic resources that may moderate these relationships. The focus on individual-level variables may inadvertently overlook structural and systemic factors that constrain or enable effective educational leadership. Research should also investigate potential moderating variables, including school context, community characteristics, and systemic support structures. Mixed-methods approaches could provide deeper insights into the mechanisms through which personality traits translate into servant leadership behaviors and ultimately influence educational outcomes.

5.   ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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