

The Dynamics of Servant Leadership Style Practices and Work Commitment in TVET Setting: Developing a Local Practice Model for Cambodians

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Abstract

The fundamental purpose of this study was to examine how Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institute directors in Cambodia might encourage TVET teachers' work commitment (WOCO) by using a servant leadership (SELE) style. The three research questions on the degree of SELE style practice, the degree of teachers' WOCO, and the impact of SELE style practices on teachers' WOCO were designed to achieve the goal of the study. A correlational study design and a quantitative research methodology were employed. Using a random sampling technique, 235 TVET teachers from 8 TVET Institutes in Phnom Penh City took part in the study. Each teacher had an equal chance of being selected through the procedures. A questionnaire was used to collect the research data, which were then analyzed quantitatively using methods such as correlation, one-sample t-test, and simple linear regression. Both teachers' WOCO and SELE practice were determined to be at moderate levels. Additionally, it was found that SELE has a significant beneficial effect on TVET teachers' WOCO. Consequently, the practice of SELE style enhances teachers' WOCO; the more SELE is used in TVET centers, the more teachers' WOCO grows. By connecting to leadership style in the TVET context, this study significantly advances the theory and literature on teacher commitment to their profession. In order to improve teachers' WOCO, TVET administrators are urged by this study to adopt an SELE approach. These findings have pedagogical implications and are utilized to offer suggestions for additional research.

Keywords: Cambodia, Practices, Servant Leadership Style, TVET Model, Work Commitment.

Introduction

The aim of maintaining economic growth as well as strengthening Cambodia's competitiveness in the Asia-Pacific region entails diversification towards high-tech industries, such as electronics and automobiles. This will need innovation and adaptation of technologies, which in their turn are possible with a high level of qualification of the workforce in IT, automobile services, and construction. Thus, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) becomes crucial in building up human resources needed for the modernization of the industry (1). While general education is aimed at preparing students for further academic education, TVET is focused more on the acquisition of practical skills as well as being ready for work and employment. Hence, TVET teachers should be responsive not only to pedagogical challenges but also to changes in the

world of technology and industry needs. Leadership in TVET encompasses not only educational but also workforce and industry practices, which is why leadership practices are especially crucial here (1). Leadership has always been identified as an important determinant of organizational effectiveness. Several researchers have conducted many studies on various leadership styles and characteristics, defining leadership style as the distinctive style by which leaders lead their followers to accomplish organizational objectives (2-6). The effects of coaching, directing, facilitating, delegating, transformational, transactional, democratic, bureaucratic, and authoritarian leadership styles on employee attitudes and performance have been examined (7-15). Moreover, in education-related studies, instructional, transformational,

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ethical, collective, and servant leadership styles were researched in terms of their impacts on teacher satisfaction, organizational commitment, effectiveness of schools, student achievement, and teacher performance (16-22).

However, among all these leadership styles, servant leadership has increasingly drawn the attention of researchers because it is based on the principle that leaders must serve their followers first and then the organization. Unlike other leadership styles, which prioritize organizational success, servant leadership fosters collaboration, participatory decision-making, ethical conduct, and development of both personal and professional skills of employees (23). The primary attributes of servant leadership are empathy, stewardship, empowerment, and ethical conduct; that is, leaders try to help their followers and manage the organizational resources properly (24-26).

In contrast to transformational leadership, whose objective is organizational transformation and goal accomplishment, servant leadership focuses on the needs of followers. Both types of leadership have a positive impact on organizational efficiency; however, servant leadership is more concerned about the personal development of followers and motivates them to do something above and beyond themselves for the betterment of the organization and society (27, 28). In the educational sector, support-oriented leadership has been linked with enhanced teacher motivation, commitment, performance, and job satisfaction (29-31).

Statement of the Problem

Various studies have been done on the effect of different leadership styles on teachers' organizational commitment (32-36). Organizational commitment has three main aspects: affective commitment (which is the employees' emotional attachment to their organization), normative commitment (moral commitment of staying within the organization), and continuance commitment (cost of staying in the organization) (35, 36). In various research studies carried out in previous years, the connection between leadership and organizational commitment is positively correlated (32-36).

For instance, one study done among almost 300 teachers in Israel looked at teachers' perception of leadership style and organizational commitment, taking into consideration demographic variables

like age and gender (32). Other similar studies have shown different results, indicating that there are organizational, cultural, and other factors affecting the effect of leadership on teachers' commitment (33-36).

In spite of an accumulating body of literature internationally, studies relating to servant leadership in the Cambodian TVET sector are still extremely scarce. This is very significant as TVET organizations are responsible for training the skilled labor force required for economic transition in Cambodia. There are concerns about a lack of administrative support, a lack of recognition among teachers, a lack of professional development, and poor leadership within certain TVET organizations. These factors can adversely impact teachers' work commitment.

Accordingly, this study investigated the level of servant leadership practices among TVET institute directors and the level of work commitment among TVET teachers in Cambodia. It also examined whether servant leadership practices significantly predict teachers' work commitment by addressing the following research questions:

- (a) What is the level of servant leadership practices among TVET institute directors in the Cambodian setting?
- (b) What is the level of work commitment among TVET teachers in the Cambodian setting?
- (c) To what extent do servant leadership practices among TVET institute directors predict TVET teachers' work commitment in the Cambodian setting?

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This study is theoretically grounded in Human Capital Theory, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, and Social Exchange Theory. Collectively, these perspectives explain how leadership practices shape employee attitudes, motivation, professional development, and organizational commitment through both intrinsic and extrinsic factors (37-42).

Social Exchange Theory provides the main explanatory basis for this study, as it emphasizes reciprocity in workplace relationships. When TVET institute directors demonstrate servant leadership through empathy, integrity, empowerment, support, and concern for teachers' professional growth, teachers are more likely to

reciprocate through stronger affective, normative, and continuance commitment (40, 42-44).

Accordingly, servant leadership (SELE) is treated as the independent variable, while teachers' work commitment (WOCO) is the dependent variable. WOCO consists of affective commitment (AFCO), normative commitment (NOCO), and continuance commitment (COCO). Although leadership has

been widely associated with employee commitment, limited empirical evidence exists on servant leadership in vocational education, particularly in Cambodia. This study addresses this gap by examining the predictive influence of servant leadership on TVET teachers' work commitment (45, 46).

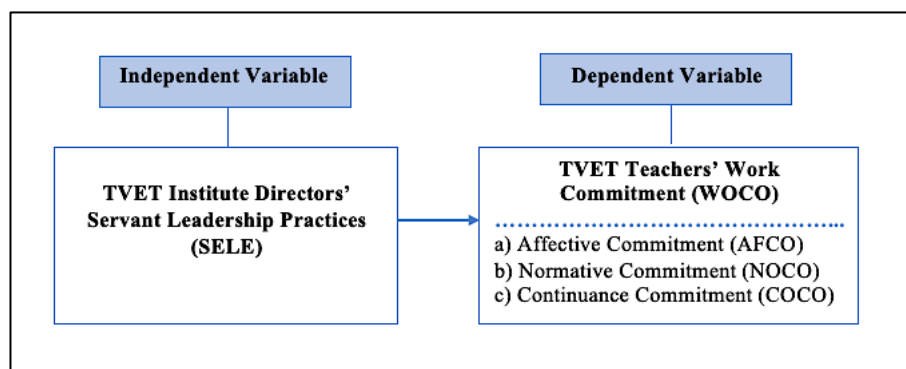


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Servant Leadership Predicting TVET Teachers' Work Commitment

Methodology

This section is described to explain and justify the chosen research design, the targeted research samples, research instruments, and data collection procedures, the data analysis and statistical uses, and the ethical considerations.

Research Design

The study uses quantitative research to help synthesize data and show patterns and trends based on the specific research aims and research questions. Since the purpose of this study is to investigate how SELE contributes to teachers' WOCO, a correlational research approach was used. By employing extra statistics, the researcher can verify relationships within a study sample. This design addresses the research challenges, and a research methodology explains how the plan will be implemented. A quantitative correlational

design study is ideal for this type of research since it may examine attitudes, behaviors, opinions, and other characteristics (47).

This study employed a correlational design since it is best suited to addressing the research objectives and issue statement. Furthermore, because the design allows the researcher to analyze present correlations between several factors without requiring, permitting, or altering any of them, it suggests that the study is non-experimental (48, 49). After an event has occurred, correlational research determines the relationship between dependent and independent variables (50, 51). The purpose of this study is to categorize the variables and ascertain how they interact—that is, whether changing one would inevitably impact another. However, this inquiry was limited to a preliminary quantitative analysis.

Table 1: The Surveyed Research Samples Classified by TVET Institutes

Names of TVET Institute*	Teachers	
	Population	Sample
TVET - A	90	37
TVET - B	85	35
TVET - C	81	33
TVET - D	63	30
TVET - E	92	37
TVET - F	48	24
TVET - G	56	26
TVET - H	25	13
Total	540	235

Note: *Names of TVET Institutes are pseudonyms

Target Population and Research Samples

During the academic year 2024-2025, this study was conducted at eight TVET institutes in Phnom Penh City, Cambodia. All eight TVET institutes were selected using a straightforward random sampling technique. During the study period, 540 TVET teachers taught at all eight of these institutes. 530 TVET teachers made up the target population for the sampling. Using a scientific sample size determination approach, 235 TVET teachers from 8 TVET Institutes in Phnom Penh City made up the research sample for this study, as presented in Table 1. Appropriate numbers of teachers were selected from each sample institute using proportionate stratified selection techniques, taking into account the teacher population in each TVET institute.

Research Instruments and Data Collection

The primary research tool used in this study's quantitative approach was a set of questionnaires. Teachers at TVET institutes were asked 42 closed-ended questions in order to gather data for this study. The survey consists of 42 closed-ended questions, 16 of which are about teachers' work commitment (WOCO) and 26 of which are on servant leadership (SELE). In light of this, the teachers' WOCO scale was modified (50), and the SELE scale was derived (49). Two experts were then asked for content validity. Before the questionnaire was sent to the study's final research samples, it was first pilot tested on 20 TVET teachers who were not involved in the actual study sample. Both the SELE scale's Cronbach's alpha reliability of 0.88 and the teachers' WOCO scale reliability of 0.89 are at a good level (51) in social and educational sciences.

The research instrument questionnaire had to be translated from English to Khmer (the national language of Cambodia) and then back to English for comparison in order to facilitate comprehension for TVET institute teachers from a variety of backgrounds and demographics. Khmer was used to translate the SELE and WOCO texts. The methodology employed in this study to back-translate the calibration tool complies with the practical and theoretical guidelines provided by (52). The task of evaluating the translated SELE and WOCO to ascertain their content validity fell to four language specialists. The original language

was Khmer. Based on the recommendations in (52), four language specialists were selected.

Research samples were asked to participate by filling out a demographic survey due to its significance. Due to their interest in the topic, TVET teachers are more likely to respond to the study. The study also inquired about future objectives and demographics. The surveys were given out in person. A letter asking for cooperation and questionnaires in Khmer were sent to the study samples that were surveyed. The completed questionnaires from the surveyed study samples were requested to be returned by the researchers. To increase the response rate, a phone follow-up was done a week later.

Data Analysis and Statistics Utilization

This study used quantitative data analysis tools to look at survey data. In order to respond to and accomplish the goals of the study, the data were examined using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. In this study, data on SELE practices and instructors' WOCO were evaluated using basic descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and a one-sample t-test; the impact of SELE style on teachers' WOCO was examined using multiple regression and Pearson correlation. A correlation coefficient in this study may range from -1 to +1. More precisely, -1 showed a perfect negative relationship, suggesting that the leadership ideologies and moral standards of contemporary educators are completely incompatible. On the other hand, +1 showed a completely positive correlation, indicating a relationship between leadership techniques and present teacher morale. There was no relationship between them if the correlation was zero [0].

Correlation is a statistical technique for analyzing the relationship between two variables. Nevertheless, this correlation technique was unable to predict or explain the relationship between a single dependent variable and many independent factors. Multiple regression was thus employed. In order to determine the criterion variation between the predictor variables, R and R^2 , past studies use multivariate linear regression (53); nevertheless, the R -value may differ. A linear relationship between the predictor and the criterion scores is indicated by a value of one, whilst no such relationship is indicated by a value of zero. A less-than-ideal link between the

predictor and criterion variables is typically indicated by any number between zero and one.

Ethical Considerations

Researchers must take ethical issues into account when doing human research or any other study that has to gather data from people. An important resource for examining the phenomenon is the researcher. It is essential to comprehend the viewpoints of academics in three main areas (52-56). The subject of the investigation, study participants, and research context comprise the three categories. According to past studies, researchers should obtain appropriate authorization, ensure participant confidentiality, and secure informed consent and access to participants before conducting research (57).

By virtue of its importance, the study complies with ethical guidelines by using pseudonyms to protect research site samples' anonymity, getting informed consent from prospective participants, reducing or eliminating participant risk, and permitting samples to leave the study at any moment without repercussions (58). Careful handling of the collected data ensured that participant responses remained private while

controlling data distribution and restricting data access. The researcher ensured that the data were examined, stored in secure folders, and then disposed of after three years.

Results

This section presents the findings of this study. The results are divided into 4 sub-sections in the following order:

- (a) the surveyed research samples' demographic data;
- (b) the level of the SELE style practices;
- (c) the level of TVET teachers' WOCO; and
- (d) the relationship between the TVET institute directors' SELEA style practices and TVET teachers' WOCO in the Cambodian setting.

Demographic Data of the Surveyed Research Samples

The results of the demographic information of TVET teachers, including gender, age, educational attainment, and job experience, are presented in this part. A demographic questionnaire was used to collect demographic data in order to further characterize the research samples that were surveyed. The results are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: The Demographic Data of TVET Teachers

Characteristic	TVET Teachers (N = 235)		
	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	133	56.60
	Female	102	43.40
Age	< 24-25 Years	13	5.54
	26-30 Years	48	20.42
	31-35 Years	55	23.40
	36-40 Years	69	29.37
	> 41 Years	50	21.27
Qualification	BA	191	81.28
	MA	36	15.32
	Ph.D.	8	3.40
Work Experience	< 5 Years	20	8.52
	6-10 Years	87	37.02
	11-15 Years	74	31.48
	16-20 Years	41	17.45
	> 20 Years	13	5.53

According to Table 2 above, 235 TVET teachers—133 (56.60%) men and 102 (43.40%) women—responded as needed to each survey that was sent out. Age groupings ranging from 25 to 41 and above were used to categorize TVET instructors. In other words, the age categories 25 years and under, 26 to 30 years, 31 to 35 years, 36 to 40 years, and 41 years and above were assigned to 13 teachers (5.54%), 48 teachers (20.42%), 55

teachers (23.40%), 69 teachers (29.37%), and 50 teachers (21.27%). Consequently, it was found that most TVET teachers were between the ages of 26 and 41.

191 (81.28%), 36 (15.32%), and 8 (3.40%) teachers indicated they had a BA, MA, or Ph.D. when asked about their qualifications. These results showed that most teachers had a bachelor's degree, followed by those with a first degree. It

seems that institutions have enough employees to complete their duties to the bare minimum if more resources are available. However, there seems to be a mismatch in meeting the requirements as long as Ph.D. holders continue to work in TVET institutes.

Since most of the TVET instructors in the sample have been employed for more than 10 years, they may have enough expertise to evaluate the level of commitment to their organizations and understand the leadership philosophies of administrators. that they can respond appropriately to the stuff inside and obtain information as needed. Due to its significance, the data collected from the questionnaire exposes three successive categories of the subject being studied. The three criteria are the teachers' WOCO level, the SELE style practice level, and the SELE style's contribution to instructors' WOCO.

The Level of the SELE Style Practices

This section answered the first research question, "What is the level of TVET institute directors' servant leadership style practices in the Cambodian setting?" Determining the extent of SELE style practices was the focus of the first study question. To determine the extent of SELE style practices at TVET Institutes, this study used simple descriptive statistics such as Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (S.D.). The researchers used the scoring and interpretation procedures for Likert-type scales recommended by another study to assess the levels measured by the five-point Likert-scale questionnaire (58). According to this grading scheme, a mean score of 1–2.4 denotes subpar performance, a mean score of 2.50–3.40 indicates intermediate performance, and a mean score of 3.50–5.00 represents exceptional performance.

Table 3: Similarities and Differences of SELE Style Practices

SELE Style Practices	TVET Teachers (N = 235)				
	M	S.D.	t-test	df	P-value
	3.35	0.88	33.23	235	0.00

Note: M = Mean, S.D. = Standard Deviation, df = Degree of Freedom.

As seen in Table 3 above, this study used a one-sample t-test to assess the level of servant leadership practice. A very significant ($p < 0.001$) t-value of 33.23 with 235 df was obtained using the one-sample t-test. The observed mean differs significantly from the test value, suggesting that servant leadership techniques are more prevalent among school principals. The researchers also used the grading criteria suggested by other study to determine whether TVET institutions practiced servant leadership at low, moderate, or high levels. A moderate amount of SELE style practice is indicated by the data in Table 3 above, which shows that the overall mean and standard deviation of practice for all SELE components are mean = 3.35 and standard deviation = 0.88.

The Level of TVET Teachers' WOCO

The results for the second study question, "What is the level of TVET teachers' work commitment in the Cambodian setting?" are presented in this part. The second research question aimed to determine the WOCO level of TVET teachers. This study used basic descriptive statistics, such as Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (S.D.), to assess the degree of teachers' WOCO. The researchers used past study's scoring method for the case five Likert scale questionnaire to assess this level (57). This grading concept states that low performance is indicated by a mean score of 1.00–2.40, moderate performance is suggested by a mean score of 2.50–3.40, and good performance is indicated by a mean score of 3.50–5.00.

Table 4: Similarities and Differences of TVET Teachers' WOCO

TVET Teachers' WOCO	TVET Teachers (N = 235)				
	M	S.D.	t-test	df	P-value
AFCO	3.40	0.15	38.55	235	0.00
NOCO	3.28	0.65	34.92	235	0.00
COCO	3.15	0.28	32.15	235	0.00
Total WOCO	3.28	0.36	35.20	235	0.00

Note: M = Mean, S.D. = Standard Deviation, df = Degree of Freedom.

As shown in Table 4 above, a one-sample t-test was used to estimate the average score and degree of WOCO among TVET teachers in the AFCO, NOCO, and COCO areas. To do this, the one-sample t-test was used to compare the data mean to the expected mean (4.00) for each dimension. As a result, the AFCO revealed a significant mean difference between the obtained and expected means ($t(235) = -38.55, p = 0.00$). In other words, the sample mean ($M = 3.40, S.D. = 0.15$) was significantly lower than the expected mean ($M = 4.00$). This indicates that TVET teachers' AFCO component did not meet expectations. Furthermore, the NOCO of TVET teachers varied significantly on average ($t(235) = 34.92, p = 0.00$). This implies that the NOCO of TVET teachers was lower than expected because the obtained mean ($M = 3.28, S.D. = 0.65$) was lower than the expected mean (4.00). Regarding the COCO to the organization, a comparable outcome seems to be attained. To put it another way, the anticipated and actual means differed significantly ($t(235) = 35.15,$

$p = 0.00$). The projected mean (4.00) was higher than the actual mean ($M = 3.15, S.D. = 0.28$). This demonstrates that there was less dedication to TVET teacher retention than anticipated. Additionally, there was a significant mean difference ($t(235) = 35.20, p = 0.00$) in the overall WOCO of TVET instructors, suggesting that their WOCO was lower than expected.

Relationship Between the TVET Institute Directors' SELEA Style Practices Predicting TVET Teachers' WOCO

The final study question, "To what extent do TVET institute directors' servant leadership style practices predict TVET teachers' work commitment in the Cambodian setting?" is addressed in this section. The third research question looked at how TVET institution directors' SELE style practices predict TVET teachers' WOCO in the Cambodian setting.

Table 5: Results of the Correlation Between the SELE and WOCO (N = 235)

	AFCO	NOCO	COCO	Total JOCO
SELE	0.79**	0.77**	0.78*	0.78**

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The SELE style of TVET institute directors and the WOCO of TVET teachers are significantly correlated ($r(235) = 0.78, p < 0.01$) in Table 5 above. The SELE and NOCO ($r(235) = 0.77, p < 0.01$), COCO ($r(235) = 0.78, p < 0.01$), and AFCO ($r(235) = 0.79, p < 0.01$) were also found to be positively correlated.

In order to determine whether SELE style practice had a statistically significant effect on teachers' WOCO, this study also employed simple linear regression. Consequently, the regression Table 6 below illustrates how SELE practice may affect teachers' WOCO.

Table 6: Results of the Multiple Linear Regression Predicting the SELEA to WOCO (N = 235)

Model	B	β	t-test	p-value
SELE Practice	0.228	.290	3.615	0.000
R = 0.795 R ² = 0.635 Adjusted R ² = 0.639 F = 157.795 P = 0.00				

Note: B = 0.228, β = .290, R = 0.795, R² = 0.635, F = 157.795, P = 0.00. Dependent Variable: WOCO, Predictors: (Constant): SELE, *Significant level at $p < 0.05$.

The impact of the SELE on TVET teachers' WOCO is summarized in Table 6 above. This indicates that the SELE practice had an impact on 64% of teachers' WOCO, with other factors influencing the remaining 36%. Additionally, the regression model indicates that teachers' WOCO is significantly predicted by SELE practices ($f(1,232) = 157.795, p < 0.01$). This result shows the extent to which the dependent variable (TVET teachers' WOCO) is influenced by the independent variable (SELE style practice).

Discussion

The levels of servant leadership (SELE) practice, teachers' work commitment (WOCO), and the impact of SELE on teachers' WOCO are discussed based on the findings of this study.

According to the data collected through the questionnaire, TVET Institutes in Phnom Penh practiced servant leadership at a moderate level. The one-sample t-test produced a highly significant result ($t = 33.23, df = 235, p < 0.001$), indicating that the observed mean was

significantly higher than the test value. This finding suggests that directors of TVET Institutes demonstrate servant leadership practices to a moderate extent. The result is consistent with servant leadership literature, which emphasizes leaders' concern for followers' growth, empowerment, ethical behavior, and organizational stewardship (22, 23, 28).

The findings further revealed that teachers' work commitment was at a moderate level. Although teachers demonstrated a reasonable degree of commitment to their work, their commitment level was lower than expected. This finding differs from the results reported by other study (32), who found a high level of organizational commitment among teachers in Israel. It is also inconsistent with the findings of another study (35), who reported positive levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment among teachers in Turkey. Differences in educational contexts, institutional environments, leadership practices, and cultural settings may explain these variations in commitment levels across studies (32-36).

The results demonstrated that servant leadership practices had a statistically significant positive effect on teachers' work commitment. This finding is consistent with previous research showing that effective leadership positively influences teachers' organizational commitment and job satisfaction across educational settings (24, 32-36, 45). Specifically, servant leadership has been associated with stronger organizational commitment, while effective leadership practices have been shown to enhance teachers' commitment and job satisfaction in both schools and higher education institutions (24, 33, 36, 45).

The findings can also be explained through Social Exchange Theory (42), which suggests that employees tend to reciprocate positive treatment received from leaders with favorable attitudes and behaviors. When TVET directors demonstrate servant leadership characteristics such as empathy, empowerment, support, integrity, and concern for professional development, teachers are more likely to respond with stronger affective, continuance, and normative commitment toward their institutions. This explanation is further supported by servant leadership literature emphasizing the positive influence of servant leaders on employee commitment, organizational

citizenship behavior, and organizational performance (22, 24, 28, 29).

The present findings are also consistent with another study's three-component model of organizational commitment (40), which argues that employee commitment consists of affective, continuance, and normative dimensions. By fostering supportive relationships and creating a positive organizational environment, servant leaders can strengthen these dimensions of commitment among teachers. Therefore, promoting servant leadership practices in TVET institutions may contribute to improving teachers' work commitment and ultimately enhance institutional effectiveness and educational quality. Comparisons across previous studies suggest that the effect of leadership on teachers' organizational commitment varies according to the leadership style adopted and the organizational context. In explaining the influence of servant leadership on teachers' work commitment, Social Exchange Theory provides a useful theoretical foundation (24, 42). Social Exchange Theory proposes that employees tend to reciprocate favorable treatment received from leaders with positive work attitudes and behaviors. Because organizational leaders are often viewed as representatives of their institutions, supportive and ethical treatment by leaders is likely to encourage employees to respond with stronger organizational commitment.

Servant leaders foster employees' emotional attachment to their organizations by providing opportunities for professional growth, encouraging participation in decision-making, and supporting individual development (22, 23, 28). Furthermore, the caring and supportive behaviors demonstrated by servant leaders may strengthen employees' sense of obligation toward their organizations, thereby enhancing normative commitment (40). Consistent with these theoretical arguments, the findings of the present study indicate that servant leadership positively influences teachers' work commitment. The greater the practice of servant leadership in TVET institutions, the stronger the commitment demonstrated by teachers toward their work and organizations. Conversely, lower levels of servant leadership may reduce teachers' commitment. These findings suggest that strengthening servant leadership practices could contribute to improving

teachers' work commitment within Cambodian TVET institutions.

The positive relationship between servant leadership and teachers' work commitment may be particularly important in the Cambodian context. Cambodian society is generally characterized by strong social relationships, respect for authority, and collective values. In such an environment, leadership approaches emphasizing empathy, ethical behavior, support, empowerment, and concern for followers may be especially effective in fostering trust and commitment. Similar positive relationships between servant leadership and organizational commitment have been reported in previous studies (24, 27, 29). The findings of the present study suggest that servant leadership may be culturally compatible with Cambodian values that emphasize community cohesion, mutual support, and collective responsibility.

Beyond confirming the positive association between servant leadership and work commitment reported in previous studies, this research makes several contributions. First, it extends the servant leadership literature by examining its application within Cambodian TVET institutions, a context that has received limited scholarly attention. Second, the findings provide support for Social Exchange Theory (42), demonstrating that teachers tend to reciprocate supportive leadership behaviors with stronger organizational commitment. Finally, the study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on leadership and organizational behavior within Cambodian educational institutions and provides practical evidence for strengthening leadership practices in the TVET sector.

Conclusion

According to this survey, the Cambodian TVET Institutes in Phnom Penh have a modest SELE level. Therefore, stakeholders like TVET Institutes can work with assistance organizations to provide principals with in-service capacity development training in order to increase the quality of SELE practice at TVET Institutes. This study also revealed that instructors have a moderate degree of WOCO related to their jobs. As a result, TVET teachers ought to devote more time to their profession. There are theoretical and practical ramifications to this discovery as well.

Theoretically, this study advances our understanding of organizational commitment and instructional leadership. In practical terms, this study demonstrated that SELE significantly raised teachers' WOCO. To support teachers' WOCO at work, TVET Institute directors should fully embrace a servant leadership style. Additionally, administrators, educators, students, and other researchers are expected to profit from the study's findings.

It could increase teachers' dedication to their work and help them understand the scope of the SELE procedures. The findings of this study will also assist TVET administrators in evaluating the level of SELE practice and implementing SELE to improve institute performance, teachers' commitment to teaching and learning processes, and their motivation. The findings of this study will once more assist children in receiving a top-notch education through improved SELE techniques and teachers' WOCO in their profession. Additionally, other scholars may utilize the findings as a starting point for additional research on relevant topics.

This study was limited to TVET institutes located in Phnom Penh City. Although Phnom Penh contains some of the largest and most resource-rich TVET institutions in Cambodia, the findings may not be fully representative of TVET institutes operating in provincial or rural areas. Differences in institutional resources, leadership practices, staffing conditions, and organizational cultures may influence teachers' work commitment and perceptions of servant leadership. Therefore, caution should be exercised when generalizing the findings beyond the study setting. Future research should include TVET institutions from different geographical regions to enhance the generalizability of the findings.

Recommendation for Further Research

The following are recommendations for further investigations into the use of the servant leadership style and job commitment in terms of the TVET context in Cambodia.

- (a) Future studies should concentrate on how different leadership philosophies affect teachers' dedication to their jobs. If TVET Institutes had been included in the investigation, the study's conclusions would have been more meaningful; instead, the analysis was restricted to TVET Institutes in the Cambodian context.

- (b) The results of this study, which only looked at the directors' application of SELE practices in connection with teachers' WOCO, would have been more pertinent if it had looked at how different leadership philosophies affected teachers' commitment to their professional duties. The study's scope was restricted to the Provincial Administration, but it could have been more broadly applicable if the research had been conducted at the sub-national level.
- (c) To increase the number of Cambodians working in technical industries and gaining the necessary skills, more research should be done on how to expand TVET institutions, how to encourage all Cambodians to value TVET education, and how TVET can draw in more investors to support the long-term, sustainable development of its educational system.

Abbreviations

AFCO: Affective Commitment, COCO: Continuance Commitment, TVET: Technical and Vocational Education and Training, SELE: Servant Leadership, WOCO: Work Commitment, NOCO: Normative Commitment.

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Author contributions

Each author makes an equal contribution to the research, study design, data analysis, and final article approval.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Data Availability

Upon reasonable request, the corresponding author will provide the datasets created and examined during this study.

Declaration of Artificial Intelligence

(AI) Assistance

The authors state that generative AI was not used in the preparation of this work. The authors developed their own conceptualization, analysis, interpretation, and writing.

Ethics Approval

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