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RESEARCH PAPER

The Impact of Teachers' Servant Leadership on Students' Alienation: An Empirical Evidence from the University Students in Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Despite the prevalence of feelings of alienation among students in higher education institutions, the existing research on student alienation has largely centered on school students and overlooked this pertinent issue among the students in higher education institutions. Building on self-determination theory, the current study proposes that teachers' servant leadership is negatively related to students' alienation from teacher, classmates and learning. Using two questionnaires on five point rating scale data was collected from 711 university students and analyzed using structural equation modeling in AMOS 28. The results show that all the hypothesized relationships were supported. Therefore, the study contributes to the different streams of literature and offers valuable novel insights for teachers and management for curbing feelings of alienation among students.

Introduction

Alienation has a rich intellectual history and gained enormous attention in management, sociology, psychology and philosophy literature. It also has gained considerable attention in the literature on educational psychology (Hascher & Hadjar, 2018; Morinaj et al., 2020). Alienation among students has become a pertinent issue in educational settings. This feeling of detachment from one's surroundings can stem from various sources, such as a lack of social integration, academic pressure, cultural differences, and differences in beliefs and values alienation can harm a students' academic performance, mental health, and overall well-being (Redden, 2002; Taylor, 2000; Thorpe, 2003; Morinaj et al., 2019).

Alienated students may feel disengaged, interested, and unmotivated to learn, leading to poor academic outcomes. Moreover, alienation can cause feeling of isolation, loneliness, and anxiety, making it difficult for students to form meaningful connections with peers and educators and participate in extracurricular activities. These consequences of alienation can lead to a negative cycle of disengagement, which can be difficult to break without proper support and intervention (Redden, 2002; Taylor, 2000; Thorpe, 2003; Morinaj et al., 2019).

Furthermore, alienation can also impact students' emotional and psychological well-being. Students who feel alienated may experiences rejection and depression, leading to a lack of confidence, self-esteem, and self-worth. These feeling can be exacerbated by the pressures of academic performance, making it challenging for students to cope with academic stress and their sense of alienation (Redden, 2002; Taylor, 2000; Thorpe, 2003; Morinaj et al., 2019). Alienation can also lead to disorientation, where students may feel uncertain about their place in the world and future aspirations (Hascher & Hadjar, 2018; Morinaj et al., 2020). Therefore, it is crucial to recognize the signs of alienation among students and provide them with appropriate resources and support to help them overcome these feelings and achieve their academic and personal goals (Redden, 2002; Taylor, 2000; Thorpe, 2003; Morinaj et al., 2019).

Past research has highlighted that alienation is a prevailing phenomenon in educational settings such as schools, colleges and universities, and students can fall prey to these negative feelings of alienation. Moreover, it can have destructive influences on the different attitudes and behaviors of the students. For instance, Hascher & Hadjar (2018) highlighted that alienation among school students could hamper their learning and social behaviors that may trigger nonparticipation in the classrooms and deviant behaviors.

Despite these valuable contributions to the alienation among students, omissions and gaps still require further investigation into the concept of student alienation. The prime motivation to conduct this research study is based on the following reasons. First, past research on student alienation has focused on the outcomes of students' alienation. To the best of our knowledge, few studies have shed light on the antecedents that can help educational institutions undermine students' feelings of alienation. Second, the research on student alienation has focused on school students to explore the phenomenon of alienation and has largely glossed over the higher education students such as university students (Gravett & Winstone, 2022; Morinaj et al., 2020; Wong, 2022). Third, growing research calls have urged scholars to explore student alienation to provide effective strategies to overcome this issue (Hascher & Hadjar, 2018; Morinaj et al., 2020). To plug in these knowledge gaps, Building on self-determination theory, the present study proposes that teachers' servant leadership can undermine students feeling of alienation.

The present study considered teachers' servant leadership style as a predictor in reducing students' feelings of alienation for the following theoretical reasons. First, the recent literature on pedagogy and teaching (e.g., Dalati, 2016; Joseph Jeyaraj & Gandolfi, 2022; Khatri et al., 2020) highlighted that servant leadership due to its exclusive focus on serving others and community is the most appropriate leadership style that can help teachers to shape and develop its students so that they can serve others and society. Moreover, the literature also revealed that universities as higher education institutions are responsible for preparing young people to play an active role in the development of community and society because the prime objective of the higher education institution is providing service to others. Joseph Jeyaraj and Gandolfi (2022) noted a surprising omission in exploring teachers' servant leadership due to the higher education institution's focus on short-term objectives.

Literature Review

Prior studies have explicitly noted that the existing leadership models are inappropriate and ineffective due to the short-term focus of higher education institutions (Scardino, 2013; Satyapuitra, 2013; Wheeler, 2011). Joseph Jeyaraj and

Gandolfi (2022,) rightly noted that "most current leadership models in higher education are unsuitable and unsuccessful as they merely focus on short-term objectives. The primary aim in higher education is to provide service to others; hence, servant leadership is the most effective model to enhance the service culture within a higher education environment. Furthermore, higher education institutions function best when the entire community embodies a servant leadership model that will produce a long-term commitment to organizational effectiveness".

Second, past research has highlighted that servant leadership exclusively focuses on serving others and encourages building strong interpersonal relationships with others and nurtures cooperative behaviors among individuals that can help them share their problems and issues with their leaders and fellows (Jiménez-Estévez et al., 2023; Eva et al., 2019; Gultekin, 2020). Finally, servant leadership empowers the followers and creates meaningful activities that can enhance followers' participation and engagement in activities. Past research has highlighted that high-quality interpersonal relationships, meaningfulness, and cooperative behaviors are fundamental in undermining feelings of alienation. With this backdrop, it is likely that teachers who practice servant leadership behavior can encourage students to build high-quality relationships with teachers and their classmates. Moreover, they can reduce students' feelings of alienation by furnishing meaningful classroom learning and encouraging cooperative behaviors.

Students' Alienation in Higher Education Institutions

Higher education is a critical stage in the overall educational process, as it is instrumental in producing responsible and productive citizens (Agasisti et al., 2021; Benos & Zotou, 2014). An effective higher education system is essential for a nation to aim for growth and development (Agasisti et al., 2021). Such a system should provide students with diverse learning experiences that foster their personal growth and enable them to realize their full potential (Austin & Jones, 2015; Hanushek, 2016). Therefore, higher education institutions in any country must offer learning opportunities and adopt student-centered decision-making approaches (Levchenko et al., 2017). They should also provide real-life experiences and develop research skills, thus preparing students to tackle challenges in their future careers (Pumptow & Brahm, 2021; Berchin et al., 2021). Ultimately, higher education institutions should provide enriching experiences that shape each student's life on campus (Pumptow & Brahm, 2021; Berchin et al., 2021).

Barnhardt and Ginns (2014) proposed a framework for student learning theory (SLT) based on the concept of alienation to the empirical basis of the approaches to learning perspective. The framework suggests new interpretations of an established micro-level theory across three levels of interpretation: a context-free psychological state, a context-bound psychological state, and sociological processes that give rise to these psychological states.

In sum, the research on alienation among students in higher education is still in its infancy and focusing on different perspectives including cultural differences, ethnicity, and race. Furthermore, it sheds light on the individualism inherent in neoliberalism and global capitalism. Although these perspectives have made valuable contribution in highlighting the importance of alienation among students, however, the existing literature has largely glossed over the classroom, learning and teacher-student's dynamics within and outside the boundaries of the institution. Against this backdrop, the work hand focused on exploring the role of teacher leadership on students'

alienation as it is particularly relevant in higher education, where the teacher-student relationship plays a crucial role in shaping students' academic and personal growth.

Theory and Hypothesis Development

Relationship between teachers' servant leadership and students' alienation from learning

Servant leadership is an approach to leadership that focuses on putting the needs of others first and empowering them to reach their full potential. In an educational setting, this leadership style can effectively promote learning behaviors (Eva et al., 2019; Bavik, 2020; Van Dierendonck, 2011). This can promote a sense of belonging and encourage students to actively participate in their learning. Servant leadership also encourages collaboration and teamwork, which can help students develop important social and emotional skills (Alshammari et al., 2019; Noland & Richards, 2015). Teachers who practice servant leadership prioritize listening to their students and providing individualized support, which can help students develop a growth mindset and a willingness to take risks and try new things (Alshammari et al., 2019; Khatri et al., 2021).

Servant leadership promotes learning behaviors by creating a positive and empowering learning environment where students feel supported, motivated, and empowered to take ownership of their learning (Wang, Meng & Cai, 2019). This approach to teaching can be highly effectively in reducing students' feelings of alienation from the learning process. When teachers practice servant leadership, they create a safe and supportive environment where students' feel valued and respected (Alshammari et al., 2019; Khatri et al., 2021).

According to STD (Ryan & Deci, 2020), teachers' support is a critical factor that help students accomplish their psychological needs such as autonomy, competence and relatedness that positively shapes their engagement in the learning process (Hsu et al., 2019; Reeve, 2013). By focusing on the needs and interests of their students, rather than just delivering the curriculum, teachers as servant leaders can help to create a more engaging and meaningful learning experience, one that encourages students to become active and enthusiastic participants in their own education (Alshammari et al., 2019; Khatri et al., 2021). Overall, teacher-servant leadership can help to transform the classroom into a place where students feel empowered, motivated, and connected to the learning process rather than alienated or disengaged. Against this backdrop the study proposes the following hypothesis.

H1: Teachers' servant leadership is negatively related to students' alienation from learning.

Relationship between teachers' servant leadership and students' alienation from Teacher

Teacher-servant leadership is a leadership style that emphasizes the teacher's role as a servant to their students. This approach can effectively reduce students' sense of alienation from their teachers. By prioritizing the needs and well-being of their students, teachers who practice servant leadership create a sense of trust and respect between themselves and their students (Noland & Richards, 2015; Scardino, 2013). They listen to their students' concerns and provide individualized support, which can help to reduce feelings of isolation and disconnection from the teacher. Servant leadership also

promotes open communication and collaboration, which can help to build a positive and supportive relationship between teachers and students (Alshammari et al., 2019).

The self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) places emphasis on the significance of teaching practices and the provision of student engagement opportunities at various levels within the educational setting, including the school, classroom, and instructional levels. STD highlights that teachers can develop strong relationships with students in order to fulfill their needs of relatedness by creating a safe and respectful learning environment. Drawing on STD, teachers who practice servant leadership help students feel more connected to their teacher and can help reduce students' sense of alienation from the teacher and foster a greater sense of belonging and investment in their education. Thus, the study proposes the following hypothesis.

H2: Teachers' servant leadership is negatively related to students' alienation from teachers.

Relationship between teachers' servant leadership and students' alienation from Teacher

Servant leadership promotes and practices cooperative behaviors among their followers that provide the basis for mutual sharing and strong interpersonal bonding among the followers (Bavik, 2020; Bavik et al., 2017; Zhang et al., 2022). The quest for helping each other and sharing their views creates an environment characterized by trust, care and concern for others, enhancing the sense of inclusion and association among the followers (Chou & Stauffer, 2016; Gotsis & Grimani, 2016). Further, it strengthens the sense of belonging among the followers, knits them in a node of close relationships and helps each other accomplish their tasks. Servant leadership's emphasis on encouraging followers to foster high-quality trust-based relationships and cooperative behaviors inspires followers to proactively engage in their work roles and view themselves as an integral part of the organization (Liden et al., 2008; Liden et al., 2015; Usman et al., 2022).

Teacher-servant leadership is a leadership style that prioritizes the needs and well-being of students. This approach can help reduce students' alienation from their classmates by promoting collaboration, teamwork, and mutual respect (Crippen & Willows, 2019; Khatri et al., 2021). Teachers who practice servant leadership encourage their students to work together, share their ideas, and support one another in their learning (Bowman, 2005). By emphasizing the importance of listening to and valuing each other's perspectives, teachers can help to create a more inclusive and welcoming classroom environment (Herman & Marlowe, 2005; Greenleaf, 2003). This can help reduce feelings of isolation and disconnection from classmates, which can often contribute to a sense of alienation from the learning process.

STD posits that teachers' can develop students' orientation to build and maintain high quality relationship with others by enhancing their sense of relatedness. Drawing on STD, by promoting a culture of collaboration and mutual support, teachers who practice servant leadership help students feel more connected to their peers and more invested in their own education. This can help to reduce students' sense of alienation from their classmates and foster a greater sense of community and belonging in the classroom. Thus, the study proposes the following hypothesis.

H3: Teachers' servant leadership is negatively related to students' alienation from classmates.

Material and Methods

The present study randomly selected 6 public sectors university from Punjab. Cross-sectional survey data were collected from the students enrolled in these public sector universities. The management of access to potential respondents was facilitated via the utilization of personal and professional references. The potential participants were furnished with a cover letter that contained details regarding the character and objective of the research, the assurance of privacy, and the voluntary nature of their involvement in data collection process. A web link containing the survey was also sent to the respondents via email and other social media means to the potential respondents with a request to fill in the survey by clicking the web-link. The present study distributed 1500 surveys to the respondents, received 1167 responses, and followed the coding process to enter data using SPSS 28. Subsequently, the dataset was subjected to a screening process to identify any instances of missing values. As a result, a total of 175 responses were found to contain missing data and were consequently removed from the dataset.

The current research also utilized the Mahalanobis distance squared test to detect any outliers present in the dataset. The Mahalanobis distance is a statistical measure that quantifies the deviation of an observation from the mean of a distribution in terms of the number of standard deviations (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013) and is considered a rigorous method to clean the data from outliers, specifically in multivariate data analysis (Hodge & Austin, 2004). Mahalanobis distance test revealed that 281 responses were outliers and inappropriately handled by the respondents and were removed from the data. After removing missing data and outliers, the present study obtained a usable sample of 711 responses to test the proposed hypothesis.

Measures and Scales: All the variables were measured using a five-point Likert scale anchored on 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) i.e. the two scales used were Teachers' servant leadership style by Liden et.al (2015) and Students' Alienation by Morinaj, et.al. (2017)

Means and Correlation

Table 1
Means and correlations

Construct	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Techer Servant leadership	3.16	0.89	-			
2. Alienation from learning	2.92	1.06	-.22**	-		
3. Alienation from Teacher	2.88	0.78	-.24**	.10**	-	
4. Alienation from classmates	3.09	1.04	-.17**	.19**	.13**	-

Note. N= 711. * p <.05. ** p <.01 level (2-tailed).

Measurement Model

The measurement model is a covariance-based analysis that offers valuable information regarding the model fitness and distinctness of all the understudy constructs. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to assess the measurement model that comprised teachers' servant leadership, alienation from class, alienation from the teacher and alienation from learning. The fit indices – $\chi^2(428) = 918.14$, $\chi^2/df = 2.14$, RMSEA = .04, IFI = .97, CFI = .96, TLI = .97 –revealed that the measurement model has an acceptable fit with the data. The factor loading scores showed that all the suggested factors have optimal loadings > .60.
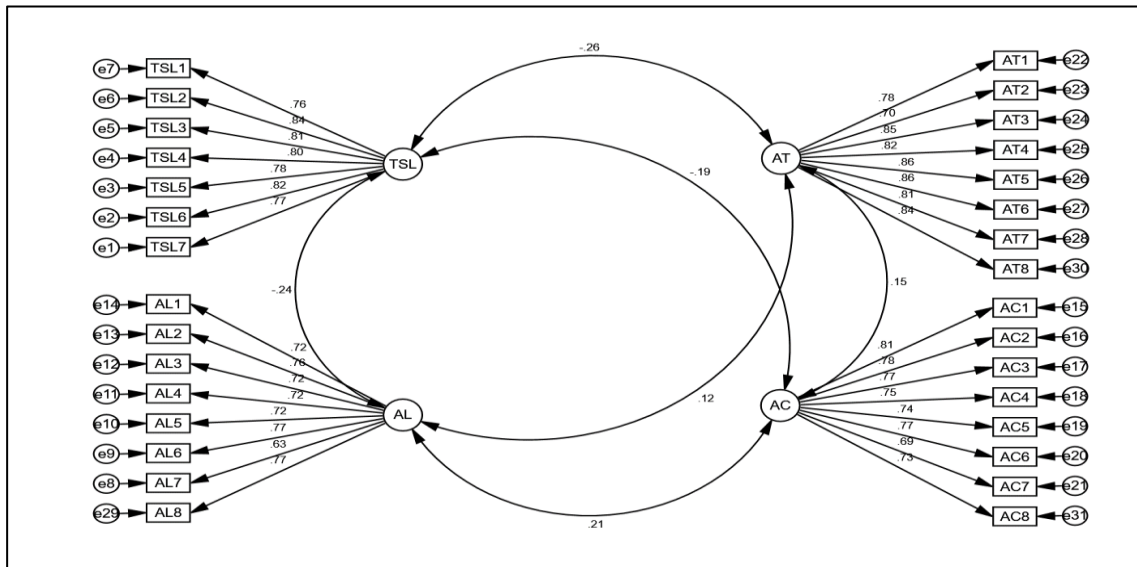
Fig No 1: Measurement Model

Table 2
Discriminant validity, convergent validity, and internal consistency

Construct	1	2	3	4	α	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV
1. TSL	**.79**				.92	.93	.63	.14	.07
3. AL	-.25	**.72**			.90	.90	.53	.14	.06
4. AT	-.26	.12	**.81**		.94	.94	.66	.12	.05
5. AC	-.19	.21	.15	**.75**	.91	.92	.57	.07	.04

Notes. n = 711. TSL= Teachers' servant leadership, AL= Alienation from learning, AL= Alienation from Teacher, AC= Alienation from Class, MSV = Maximum shared variance. ASV = Average shared variance. AVE = Average variance extracted. CR = Composite Reliability. Bolded values on the diagonals of columns 1to 4 are the square root values of AVE. α = Cronbach alpha.

Table 2 displays the values of average variance extracted (AVE), maximum shared variance (MSV), average shared variance, and Cronbach alpha (α). Table 2 demonstrates that the value of α is greater than .70. In addition, it was observed that the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each variable exceeded its inter-construct correlations, as presented in Table 4.6. Furthermore, it can be observed that the value of ASV is less than that of MSV, and both MSV and ASV are less than the value of AVE. The measurement scales utilized in the current study exhibited acceptable levels of internal consistency, discriminant validity, and convergent validity for the variables under investigation.

Hypothesis Testing

The present study employed SEM path analysis using AMOS 28 and simultaneously tested all the paths. First, the present study tested the direct influence of teachers' servant leadership on all three variants of alienation, including alienation from learning, alienation from teacher and alienation from class.
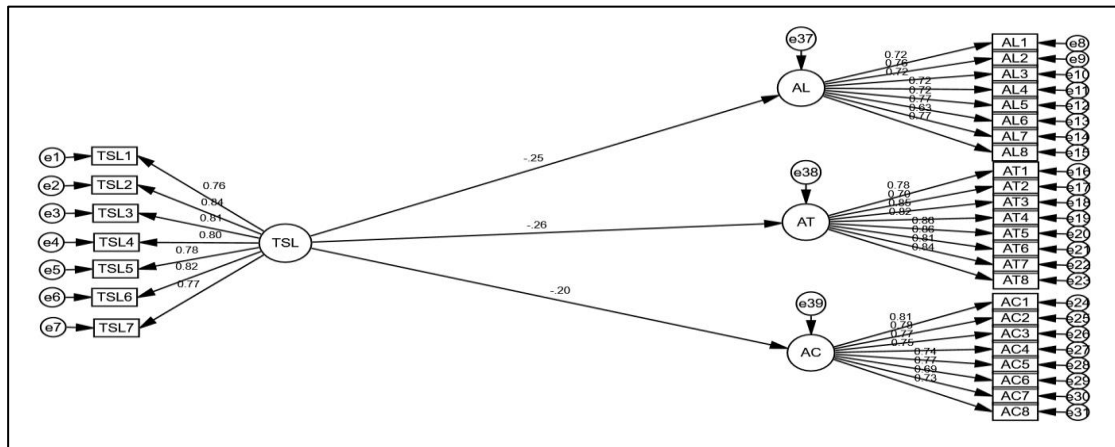
Fig. 2: Structural model for Direct Path

The fit indices – $\chi^2(431) = 943.17$, $\chi^2/df = 2.18$, IFI = .96, TLI = .96, CFI = .96, and RMSEA = .04 showed that the direct structural model had demonstrated a satisfactory fit with the data. To test the significance level for the direct paths bootstrapping specified at a sample of size 2000 was used.

Support for hypothesis 1

The results presented in Table. 4.7 exhibited a significant negative relationship between teachers' servant leadership and alienation from learning (β = -.25, SE = .05, p < .01, CI = [-.34, -.16]), suggesting that teachers' serving behaviors focus on involving students in the learning process that reduces their feelings of alienation from the learning process. Thus hypothesis 1 was supported.

Support for hypothesis 2

The results showed a significant negative relationship between teachers' servant leadership and alienation from teachers (β = -.26, SE = .04, p < .01, CI = [-.35, -.19]), indicating that the teachers as servant leaders take care of the development of the students and focus on the suitable teaching behaviors that help them create a close bonding with the student and reduces their feelings of alienation from teachers. Thus hypothesis 2 was supported.

Support for hypothesis 3

The results have revealed a significant negative relationship between teachers' servant leadership and Alienation from classmates(β = -.20, SE = .04, p < .01, CI = [-.29, -.11]), indicating that teachers as servant leaders create health classroom environment to ensure the involvement of all the student that help them eliminates students' feeling of alienation from the class. Thus hypothesis 3 was supported.

Table 3
Hypotheses testing results

	β	SE
Teachers' servant leadership→ Alienation from learning	-.25**	.05
Teachers' servant leadership → Alienation from teacher	-.26**	.04
Teachers' servant leadership → Alienation from class	-.20**	.04

Notes: N= 711, β = Standardized coefficient, SE= Standard error

Findings of the study

- The current research study empirically established a significant negative relationship between teachers' servant leadership and students' alienation from learning.

- The current research study found a significant negative relationship between teachers' servant leadership and students' alienation from teacher.

- The current research study found a significant negative relationship between teachers' servant leadership and students' alienation from class.

Discussion

In recent years, there has been an increasing interested in understanding the phenomenon of student alienation and its impact on their personal and academic outcomes (Hascher & Hadjar, 2018; Morinaj & Hascher, 2018; Morinaj et al., 2019). However, most of the research in this area has focused on school students, neglecting the potential influence of alienation on those studying in higher education institutions (Morinaj & Hascher, 2018; Morinaj et al., 2019). This gap in the literature prompted the present study, which aims to explore the role of teachers' servant leadership in mitigating students'' alienation from learning, teacher, and class among college and university students. To address this gap, the present study proposes a model that explores the role of teachers' servant leadership in mitigating students' alienation from learning, teaching, and class. Based on the data collected from 711 university students, the present study empirically found that servant leadership was negatively and significant related to students' alienation form teachers, classmates and learning.

Theoretical Implications

The current research study makes several valuable contributions to the existing literature on teachers' servant leadership and students' alienation in many ways. First, by revealing a significant negative relationship between teachers' servant leadership and three variants of students' alienation- alienation from learning, alienation from teacher and alienation from class, the current research study extends the literature on teachers' servant leadership (Dalati, 2016; Joseph Jeyaraj & Gandolfi, 2020; Khatri et al., 2021) that is explicative in highlight the crucial role of teachers as servant leadership in shaping and developing students' positive behavior and undermining their negative behaviors. Furthermore, the current study extends the literature on servant leadership that has gained enormous attention in social science research (Darvishmotevali & Altinay, 2022; Eva et al., 2019).

Second, by exploring this relationship, the current research study also responds to the different research calls that have urged research scholars to explore the crucial role of servant leadership in educational settings (Dalati, 2016; Joseph Jeyaraj & Gandolfi, 2020; Khatri et al., 2021). Proceeding further, the current research study extends the literature on students' alienation that has gained sizable attention in the mainstream literature on students' behaviors (Hascher & Hadjar, 2018; Morinaj & Hascher, 2018; Morinaj et al., 2019). Prior research studies acknowledged the prevalence of alienation among students and highlighted its detrimental influence on students' positive behaviors that can enhance their academic growth and development. In this regard, the research scholars have drawn attention to these key issues and invited the scholars to explore the crucial issue of alienation (Hascher & Hadjar, 2018; Morinaj &

Hascher, 2018; Morinaj et al., 2019). The current research study positively responds to this invitation and extends the literature on students' alienation. The study also contributes to the existing literature on alienation in general (Ali et al., 2022a; Guo et al., 2022; Usman et al., 2021).

Third, the study also contributes to the student's learning literature by exploring the role of teachers' servant leadership in undermining students' alienation from learning, as past research has rightly highlighted that enhancing students' learning is one of the fundamental objectives of any educational institution that help students to develop their personal, professional and social capabilities (Garzón & Acevedo, 2019; Guo et al., 2020; Saputra, 2022). Furthermore, it has an imperative role in shaping and developing productive individuals that can positively contribute to the community and society (Lowrey et al., 2020). The distortion and disturbance in the learning process can jeopardize and hamper individuals' academic, personal and professional development, negatively affecting the individual and society (Maag & Reid, 2006; McAlpine & Weston, 2002). Against this backdrop, the study makes a valuable contribution by highlighting that teachers' servant leadership undermines students' alienation from learning, which would enhance their engagement in the learning process.

Fourth, by establishing the negative relationship between teachers' servant leadership and students' alienation from teachers, the study contributes to the literature on the importance of teacher's role in building a high-quality relationship with their students that can positively shape and develop numerous constructive outcomes for the student's achievement and enhancing the learning capabilities (Corti & Gelati, 2020; Kong & Wang, 2021; Luo, 2019). Fifth, by positing a negative relationship between teachers' servant leadership and alienation from class, the study contributes to classroom management literature (Franklin & Harrington, 2019; Lazarides et al., 2020) as it highlights alienation from the class that can hamper students' class participation and engagement.

Practical Implication

Teacher servant leaders in higher education institutions can adopt several strategies to reduce alienation from teachers among students. First, teachers as servant leaders can nurture a supportive enviorment that promotes students' sense of belonging and connection to the teacher and class that would positively uplift their engagement and participation in the learning process. Teacher as servant leaders can accomplish this through active listening and promoting two way strong communication and cultiavating a culture of mutual respect. Second, teacher servant leaders can effectively utlize a student-centered approach to responds to the students' diverse learning needs and preferences. This can involve using varied teaching methods, providing constructive feedback, and offering collaborative learning and problem-solving opportunities.

Third, teacher servant leaders can promote a culture of inclusivity and equity that recognizes and respects students' unique backgrounds, identities, and experiences. This can be achieved by creating safe spaces for students to express themselves, acknowledging and addressing any potential biases or prejudices, and actively engaging in anti-discriminatory practices. By adopting these strategies, teacher servant leaders can reduce alienation from teachers among students and promote a positive and meaningful learning experience in higher education institutions. Teacher servant leaders in higher education institutions can adopt several strategies to reduce student alienation from classmates. Firstly, they can encourage students to work collaboratively

and create opportunities for group activities that promote social interaction and engagement. This can include group discussions, project work, and peer mentoring programs. Secondly, teacher servant leaders can promote a culture of inclusivity and respect that values each student's diversity and unique perspectives. This can involve creating safe spaces for students to express themselves, acknowledging and addressing any potential biases or prejudices, and actively engaging in anti-discriminatory practices. Thirdly, teacher servant leaders can support and guide students who may be struggling academically or socially and offer resources and referrals to relevant support services as needed. By adopting these strategies, teacher servant leaders can help students to feel more connected to their classmates and promote a sense of belonging and community in higher education institutions.

Limitation and Future Research Directions

Despite its several strengths, the current study is not without caveats that should be noted. First, although common method variance may not be an issue in the data as Harman single factor test demonstrate satisfactory results, the cross-sectional nature of data precludes measuring the changes over time that can hinder the examination of cause-and-effect relationships (MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012; Podsakoff et al., 2003). Additionally, cross-sectional data may not be representative of the population as a whole, as it only captures a small sample at a particular moment in time and it does not allow for the identification of trends or patterns over time (Hofer et al., 2002; Huselid & Becker, 1996). As a result, it may be difficult to make predictions or develop effective strategies based on this type of data alone (Hofer et al., 2002; Huselid & Becker, 1996).

Previous studies have shown that employing time lag data might increase the dependability of the data gathered on variables of interest by mitigating problems associated with common method variation (MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012; Podsakoff et al., 2003). Future studies should gather survey data with a temporal lag to reinforce the conclusions of this study. The present study theorized and empirically tested the relationship between teacher servant leadership and three variants of student alienation: alienation from the teacher, alienation from the classmates, and alienation from learning.

Future research should explore other teacher leadership styles that can help undermine feelings of alienation among students. For instance, Inclusive leadership refers to a leadership style that prioritizes creating an environment that values and respects diversity, equity, and inclusion (Ashikali et al., 2021; Korkmaz et al., 2022). It involves actively seeking out and valuing diverse perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds and fostering a sense of belonging for all individuals within the organization or team (Ashikali et al., 2021; Korkmaz et al., 2022).

The present study explored the influence of servant leadership on the three variants of alienation including alienation from learning, alienation from classmates and alienation from teachers. The future studies should explore the mediating and moderation mechanism of the proposed relationships. Past research highlights that learning orientation ignites individuals' quest for seeking learning opportunities and encourage them to exchange their knowledge with others that high-quality relationship in, the results of the reciprocal spiral of exchange relationships (Almusharraf & Bailey, 2021; Khery et al., 2021; Liu & Xiang, 2020) that can potentially undermine students' alienation. In this regard future studies should explore students learning orientation as a mediator in the relationship between teacher servant leadership and students' alienation.

Furthermore, students' resilience entails adapting and returning from adverse or stressful situations to regain positive attitudes to handle problematic situations (Reeve et al., 2020; Wu et al., 2020; Brewer et. 2019). Against this backdrop it is likely that students high on resilience can better handle alienation as compared to those who are low on resilience. Future studies should explore students' resilience as boundary condition on the relationships of servant leadership with alienation from learning, alienation from classmates and alienation from teachers to further extend and contribute to this line of inquiry.

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