



## **Impact of Servant Leadership, Self-Efficacy and Work Stress on Teachers' Performance at Christian School**

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**Abstract:** This study aims to analyze the effect of servant leadership, self-efficacy, and work stress on teachers' performance. Aside from that, the study will also investigate if work stress can mediate the effect of servant leadership and self-efficacy on teachers' performance. The approach used in this study is a quantitative approach, to confirm relationships between the variables. This is done by using a 36-person sample and a questionnaire modified from a number of other research. Data was collected by giving questionnaires to the teachers of a Christian High School and Middle School in Bandung. Then, the data was processed using Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modelling, by testing the validity and reliability first, and then testing the hypothesis. The result of this research shows that servant leadership has a positive effect on performance, although not significant. Meanwhile, self-efficacy has significant positive effect on performance. Work stress can affect performance negatively, although it wasn't found to be significant in this study. For the mediation effect, work stress can mediate the positive effect of servant leadership and self-efficacy on performance, but not significantly. So in order to maintain or increase the quality of school, teachers need to have high self-efficacy level, and the school can help with that by mentoring and coaching, or other methods.

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## **Introduction**

A nation's education quality is indicated by its school performance. Teachers' performance is one of the main factors that determines the school's performance because it directly affects the education quality of a school (Saepurohman & Satori, 2021). Thus, teachers' performance becomes an important aspect that needs to be maintained and even increased at all times. However, this profession has high physical and psychological demands. A Workforce Attitudes Toward Mental Health survey in 2023 shows teaching as the most stressful job in the UK (Glass, 2023). In Indonesia, work stress for teachers can also result from the recent curriculum change into Kurikulum Merdeka. A study conducted in Indonesia's middle schools found that many teachers still feel unprepared to apply the new curriculum (Lestari et al., 2023). This unpreparedness can lead to too much stress and in turn lower the teachers' performance (Fahmi et al., 2022; Kumar et al., 2021).

Performance in general is all behaviors and activities done by a worker that contribute to the organization's goals (Ramawickrama, et al., 2017). For teachers, the goal is to educate their students through their teachings. So teachers' performance can be defined as all behaviors and activities done by teachers, in the form of preparing, implementing, and evaluating lessons (Hidayat & Rohita, 2020; Supardi, 2014). Teachers' performance can be



influenced negatively or positively by internal and external factors, such as leadership and internal motivation (Kumari & Kumar, 2023).

Teachers who believe in their ability to do their job well will have better control of their situations. Even when faced with challenges, this belief motivates them to keep looking for solutions and work harder (Yagil et al., 2023). The belief in one's ability to successfully finish a task and achieve their goals is called self-efficacy. In the context of a teacher's self-efficacy, it is a belief in one's capacity to teach their students successfully (Wray et al., 2022). Self-efficacy affects a person's behavior through motivation, which will push someone to work harder and do their best (Shorey & Lopez, 2021). Thus, good self-efficacy can improve work performance (Lim et al., 2022; Misu et al., 2022; Yagil et al., 2023). A strong belief in a person's ability can also help them to overcome stressors that hinder performance because every difficulty is perceived as a challenge to be overcome (Li, 2023; Yagil et al., 2023).

Stress, on the other hand, is a variable that is often negatively associated with work performance. Although not all stress is harmful, this study defines work stress as negative physical and emotional responses that occur when a worker's abilities, resources, and needs do not align with the demands of their job (Saadeh & Suifan, 2020). So, work stress in this context should negatively affect performance (Alinejad et al., 2023; Fahmi et al., 2022; Kumar et al., 2021).

Aside from the internal factors, teachers' performance can also be influenced by the leaders (principals). A leadership style that has been studied extensively is servant leadership, a leadership style influenced by Jesus Christ (Khoe, 2022). Servant leadership is a leadership style where the leader actively pays attention and serves the needs of their followers, whether physical or psychological. It has seven characteristics: conceptualizing, emotional healing, putting followers first, helping followers grow and succeed, behaving ethically, empowering, and creating values for the community (Northouse, 2019). Leaders who serve the needs of their followers can motivate their followers to work harder and overcome stress and challenges (Zhang et al., 2023), and eventually improve their work performance (Kaltiainen & Hakanen, 2020; Malik et al., 2022; Zada et al., 2022).

In conclusion, teachers' performance is clearly a very important aspect of school management. As explained above, it is influenced by many factors, some of which are teachers' stress level, self-efficacy, and the leadership style of the principal. Stress level is also probably influenced by self-efficacy and leadership, and so could have a mediation effect. As for the leadership style, servant leadership should be very suitable for a Christian school. Therefore, this study will investigate the effect of servant leadership, self-efficacy, and work stress on teachers' performance. Aside from that, the study will also learn if work stress can mediate the effect of servant leadership and self-efficacy on teachers' performance. Although each of these variables is well-researched, none of the previous studies have studied all of them together, as well as the mediation effect of work stress (Fahmi et al., 2022; Misu et al., 2022; Li, 2023; Yagil et al., 2023; Zada et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2023). With the help of this study, Indonesian school administrators should be able to better understand how to support and even improve teacher performance by focusing on their personal well-being and building internal motivation.

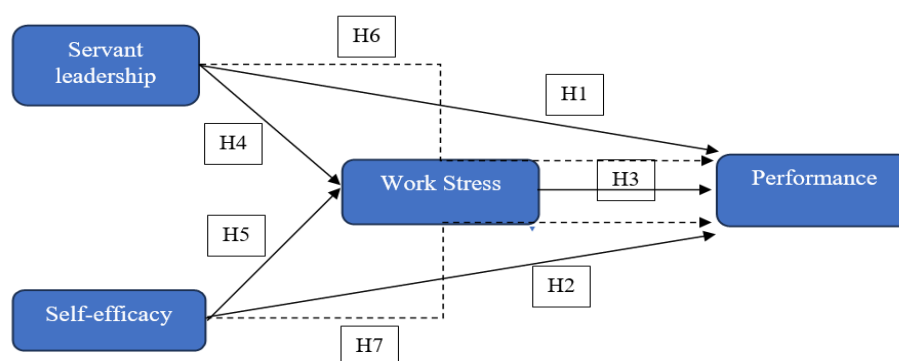
## **Research Method**

This study utilizes a quantitative approach to validate the predicted correlations among several variables by conducting a survey with questionnaires. The study was

conducted at XYZ Christian High and Middle Schools in Bandung City, in March 2024. The population of this study includes the teachers of XYZ Middle and High School. Because of the small population size, the sampling technique used is total population sampling. After distributing the online questionnaire to all teachers, a total of 36 responses were obtained. The instrument used is a questionnaire in the form of Google Forms which were distributed online. The questionnaire outlines the objectives of the study, as well as the confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents. It is divided into five sections. The first section measures respondents' characteristics. The other four sections measure the four variables in this study.

Work Performance was measured using three indicators: lesson planning, lesson implementation, and evaluation. Lesson planning includes short and long-term planning, with fun learning method incorporated. Implementation includes the methods and media used in the lessons, and also student engagement in class. Evaluation consists of the building of instrument, and utilization of the result. It was adapted by Kalsum (2015). Self-efficacy was measured using four indicators. The first is job accomplishment, which is the ability to accomplish their work successfully, even when faced with problems. The second is skill development on the job, which is the confidence in their ability to develop their skills. The third indicator is social interaction, where teachers are confident with their ability to form good relationship with students, parents, and colleagues. The last indicator is coping with job stress, the ability to overcome stress and keep doing their job well. These four indicators were suggested by Schwarzer et al. in 1999 and later adapted for use in Indonesia by Yasin et al. (2022). Servant leadership was measured using seven indicators, based on the seven characteristics of servant leaders. The seven indicators are conceptualizing, emotional healing, putting followers first, helping followers grow and succeed, behaving ethically, empowering, and creating values for community (Liden et al., 2008). These indicators have been adapted and used by many researches worldwide (Alfaydi, 2017; Grobler & Flotman, 2020; Passakonjaras et al., 2019). Work stress consists of four indicators: job stress (too much work and not enough time), role expectation conflict (different expectations from different people), coworker support (getting help from colleagues), and work-life balance (ability to feel a balance in their work and life outside of work) (Shukla & Srivastava 2016). It was adapted for measuring teachers' work stress in an Indonesian school by Lukman et al. (2019).

The questionnaire uses a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The data were then analyzed using Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) technique. PLS-SEM technique is suitable for multivariate analysis using a small sample size (Hair & Alamer, 2022). The software used for this analysis is SmartPLS 4.



**Figure 1. Research model**



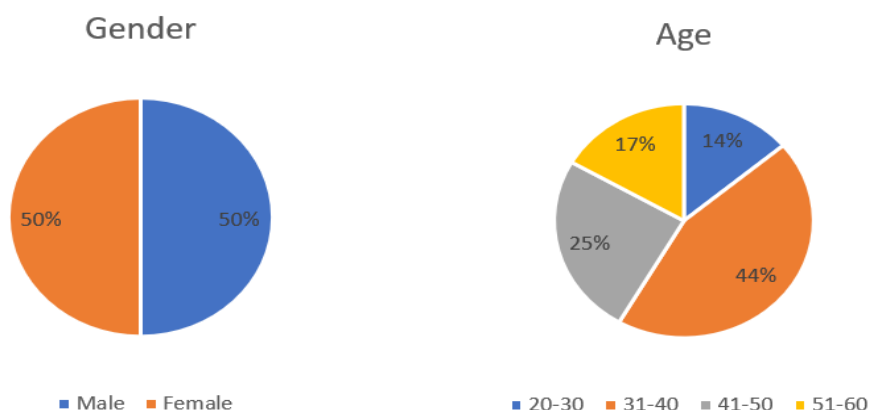
#### Information:

- H1: Servant leadership has a positive effect on performance.
- H2: Self-efficacy has a positive effect on performance
- H3: Work stress has a negative effect on performance.
- H4: Servant leadership has a negative effect on work stress.
- H5: Self-efficacy has a negative effect on work stress.
- H6: Work stress mediates the relationship between servant leadership and performance.
- H7: Work stress mediates the relationship between self-efficacy and performance.

## Results and Discussion

### *General Description of Respondents*

The study's participants are teachers of XYZ Junior High and High School in Bandung, Indonesia. The 36 participants are grouped by age and gender, as seen in figure 2.



**Figure 2. General Characteristics of Research Participants**

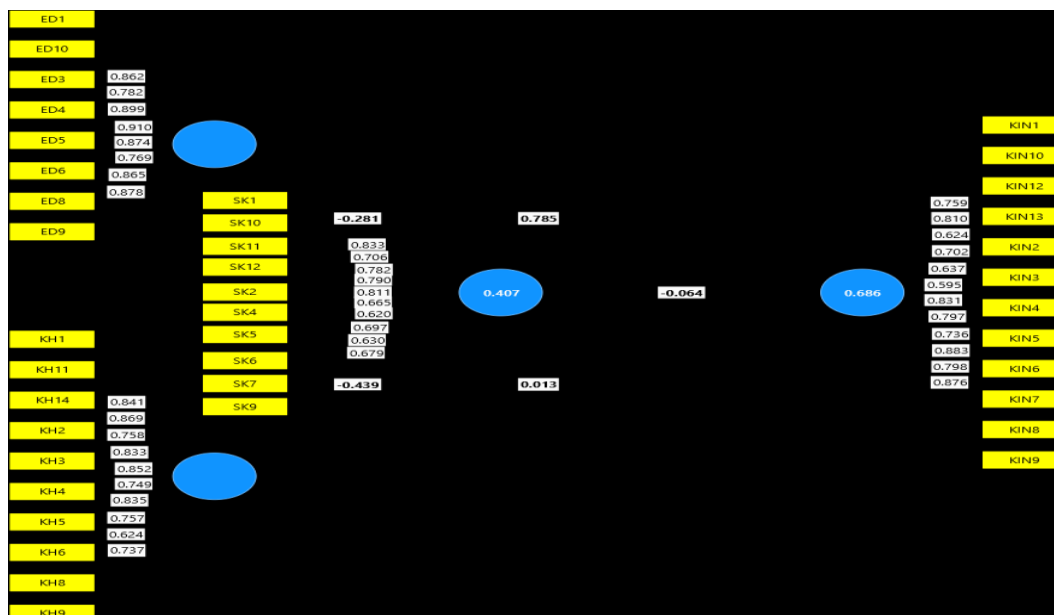
The result shows 36 respondents, with equal number of females and males (18 females and 18 males). For age, the respondents are grouped into four age groups, which are 20-30 years old, 31-40 years old, 41-50 years old, and 51-60 years old. Most of the respondents are in the 31-40 age group which amounts to 16 people, followed by 41-50 group and 51-60 group with 25% and 17% respectively. The youngest group, 20-30 years old, only has 5 participants.

### *Validity and Reliability*

Convergent validity was tested by analyzing outer loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Ideally, outer loadings values should be  $\geq 0.7$ . The result of this analysis shows some values below 0.7, but no less than 0.6. According to Hair et al. (2018), these values can be considered valid, as long as the AVE values are 0.5 and above.

**Table 1. Convergent Validity Results with AVE**

| Variable           | Average Variance Extracted (AVE) |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| Self-efficacy      | 0.733                            |
| Servant leadership | 0.622                            |
| Work stress        | 0.577                            |
| Performance        | 0.526                            |



**Figure 2. Convergent validity test result model**

After convergent validity was confirmed, discriminant validity was tested using *Fornell-Larcker* table. This table compares AVE value of each construct with their shared variance. In the table, the AVE value of each construct must be greater than the shared variance. This means the indicators can differentiate between different constructs (Hair et al., 2018). The result of this test suggests a good discriminant ability, and thus all indicators are considered valid.

**Table 2. Discriminant Validity test using Fornell-Larcker method**

| Variable           | Self-efficacy | Servant leadership | Performance | Work stress  |
|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Self-efficacy      | <b>0.856</b>  |                    |             |              |
| Servant leadership | 0.549         | <b>0.789</b>       |             |              |
| Performance        | 0.826         | 0.457              | <b>0.76</b> |              |
| Work stress        | -0.522        | -0.566             | -0.483      | <b>0.725</b> |

The internal reliability of the instrument is determined using Cronbach's Alpha and Rho-A as criteria. Values between 0.7 and 0.95 are considered satisfactory. The higher the values, the better the reliability. However, values >0.95 can indicate redundancy, and therefore a problem in reliability. For the criteria, Cronbach's Alpha is the most common method, but can sometimes underestimate the value. Consequently, Rho-A is also used in this research as a more precise method (Hair et al., 2018). Based on the data, all values of both criteria are between 0.7 and 0.95, hence all indicators of the four variables are considered reliable.

**Table 3. Reliability Test Result**

| Variable           | Cronbach's alpha | rho_a |
|--------------------|------------------|-------|
| Self-efficacy      | 0.947            | 0.950 |
| Servant leadership | 0.931            | 0.936 |
| Performance        | 0.932            | 0.945 |
| Work stress        | 0.899            | 0.905 |

### Inner Model

Inner model test is done to check the predictive ability of the model. First, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) is used to test the collinearity between variables, to make sure each





variable measures a different construct. The ideal value for VIF is below 3 (Hair et al., 2018). As seen in table 4, the VIF values in this research are all below 3. This shows no collinearity between variables, hence no bias in the correlation analysis.

**Table 4. Collinearity Check Result**

| Variable           | Self-efficacy | Servant Leadership | Performance | Work Stress |
|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Self-efficacy      |               |                    | 1.564       | 1.431       |
| Servant Leadership |               |                    | 1.756       | 1.431       |
| Performance        |               |                    |             |             |
| Work Stress        |               |                    |             | 1.687       |

Next, the inner model is tested using R-squared values. This measures the predictive strength of the independent variables for the dependent variables. The higher the values, the stronger the predictive strength (Ghozali, 2016). According to table 5, Performance has an R-squared value of 0.686. This means the variation in variable Performance is 68.6% influenced by the independent variables in the study (Servant Leadership, Self-efficacy, and Work Stress). The rest, which is around 31%, is influenced by other variables not measured in this study. For Work Stress, the R-squared value is 0.407. This implies that the independent variables (Servant Leadership and Self-efficacy) in this study influence work stress by 40.7%, while the remaining around 60% is influenced by other variables.

**Table 5. R-squared Values for Inner Model Test**

| Variable    | R-square |
|-------------|----------|
| Performance | 0.686    |
| Work Stress | 0.407    |

### Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis testing is done using SmartPLS software, by measuring path coefficients. This coefficient indicates the strength of the independent variables' influence on the dependent variables. The first hypothesis testing is done to measure direct effects (table 6), then the second test is used to measure indirect effects (table 7).

**Table 6. Hypothesis Testing Result**

| Hypothesis   | Path                            | Path coefficient | p-values | Information                                    |
|--|---------------------------------|------------------|----------|--|
| H1: Servant leadership has a positive effect on performance. | Servant Leadership→ Performance | 0,013            | 0,465    | Positive effect, not statistically significant |
| H2: Self-efficacy has a positive effect on performance       | Self-efficacy→Performance       | 0,785            | 0,000    | Positive effect, statistically significant     |
| H3: Work stress has a negative effect on performance         | Work stress→Performance         | -0,064           | 0,320    | Negative effect, not statistically significant |
| H4: Servant leadership has a negative effect on work stress. | Servant leadership→ Work stress | -0,439           | 0,002    | Negative effect, statistically significant     |
| H5: Self-efficacy has a negative effect on work stress.      | Self-efficacy→ Work stress      | -0,281           | 0,028    | Negative effect, statistically significant     |

**Table 7. Specific Indirect Effect Test Result**

| Hypothesis | Path | Specific Indirect | p-values | Information |
|------------|------|-------------------|----------|-------------|
|------------|------|-------------------|----------|-------------|



|   |  | <i>Effect</i> |       |   |
|---|--|---------------|-------|---|
| H6: Work stress mediates the relationship between servant leadership and performance. | Servant leadership→Work stress→Performance | 0,018         | 0,323 | Positive indirect effect, not statistically significant |
| H7: Work stress mediates the relationship between self-efficacy and performance.      | Self-efficacy→ Work stress→ Performance    | 0,028         | 0,359 | Positive indirect effect, not statistically significant |

Based on the information derived from table 6 and 7, we can reach the following conclusions:

- 1) The first hypothesis testing produces a coefficient of 0.013 and p-value of 0.465. The path coefficient above 0 indicates a positive effect of servant leadership on performance, while p-value above 0.05 indicates that the effect is not statistically significant. Hence, servant leadership has a positive effect on performance, although not statistically significant.
- 2) The second hypothesis testing shows a path coefficient of 0.785 and p-values of 0.000. The path coefficient above 0 indicates a positive effect of self-efficacy on performance, while p-value below 0.05 indicates a statistically significant effect. Hence, self-efficacy has a statistically significant positive effect on performance.
- 3) The third hypothesis testing shows a coefficient of -0.064 and p-value of 0.320. The path coefficient below 0 indicates a negative effect of work stress on performance, while p-value above 0.05 indicates that the effect is not statistically significant. Hence, work stress has a negative effect on performance, although not statistically significant.
- 4) The fourth hypothesis testing shows a coefficient of -0.439 and p-value of 0.002. The path coefficient below 0 indicates a negative effect of servant leadership on work stress, while p-value below 0.05 indicates a statistically significant effect. Hence, servant leadership has a statistically significant negative effect on work stress.
- 5) The fifth hypothesis testing shows a coefficient of -0.281 and p-value of 0.028. The path coefficient below 0 indicates a negative effect of self-efficacy on work stress, while p-value below 0.05 indicates a statistically significant effect. Hence, self-efficacy has a statistically significant negative effect on work stress.
- 6) The sixth hypothesis testing shows an indirect effect coefficient of 0.018 and p-value of 0.323. The coefficient above 0 indicates a positive effect of servant leadership on performance mediated by work stress. P-value above 0.05 indicates that the effect is not statistically significant. Hence, work stress mediates the positive effect of servant leadership on performance, although not statistically significant.
- 7) The last hypothesis testing shows an indirect effect coefficient of 0.028 and p-value of 0.359. The coefficient above 0 indicates a positive effect of self-efficacy on performance mediated by work stress. P-value above 0.05 indicates that the effect is not statistically significant. Hence, work stress mediates the positive effect of self-efficacy on performance, although not statistically significant.

### *Discussion*

This research found that servant leadership has a positive effect on performance, which aligns with Hypothesis 1, although the effect is not statistically significant. Leaders who demonstrate servant leadership, such as caring for their followers, being attentive to the followers' needs and putting other people first, can increase the well-being of their followers.



This motivates the followers to work harder (Sarwar et al., 2021). The stronger the servant leadership characteristics, the better their followers' performance will be (Hermanto & Srimulyani, 2022).

Self-efficacy is also found to have a positive and statistically significant effect on performance (hypothesis 2). A person who believes in their ability to succeed will have more motivation and willingness to work better (Ahmed et al., 2022). One aspect of self-efficacy in teachers is the belief in their ability to socialize with students, parents, and other colleagues. When they are confident in interacting with others, they will try to build more engagement with their students. Therefore, students can have better learning experience and increase their achievement, thus increasing the teachers' performance (Chang et al., 2022).

While servant leadership and self-efficacy can positively affect performance, work stress is found to affect performance (hypothesis 3) negatively. Teachers with high levels of stress usually have poor relationships with their students, are impatient, and exhibit negative emotions. In consequence, the students' achievements will be negatively affected. In the end, poor students' performance will also hurt the teacher's performance (Asaloei et al., 2020; Kumar et al., 2021).

Work stress is another dependent variable affected by both servant leadership and self-efficacy. In this study, both servant leadership and self-efficacy have statistically significant negative effects on work stress. Servant leaders are unique in their genuine care and attention towards their subordinates. They will make sincere efforts to support their employees, such as eliminating ineffective work policies or practices for the benefit of employees. In doing so, the employees will be more comfortable with their jobs. These leaders will also give emotional support, even for personal matters. All of these behaviors eventually lessen work stress for the workers (Rofcanin et al., 2021; Shao et al., 2022). Therefore, servant leadership behaviors can decrease or alleviate work stress for the employees (Mahon, 2021; Turner, 2022; Zada et al., 2022).

Internal factors like self-efficacy also can reduce work stress (Billett et al., 2022; Lange & Kayser, 2022). People with high self-efficacy have a lot of confidence in their ability to do their jobs successfully. With this belief, they will perceive every difficulty as a challenge that can be overcome, not as a threat (Hitches et al., 2022). They also will not care too much about other people's expectations (Fan et al., 2021). Therefore, they can be more composed and focused, without feeling too anxious about their work (Hitches et al., 2022).

It is clear that work stress can be affected by the two independent variables, and can also affect performance. For that reason, work stress can also be a mediator in the relationship between servant leadership or self-efficacy with performance. Servant leadership behaviors, as explained before, can foster positive emotions and buffer against the negatives (such as work stress) (Kaltiainen & Hakanen, 2023). When employees can maintain their emotional well-being, they can maintain their performance. Especially for teachers, their positive emotions can also influence their students' emotions and achievements (Kumar et al., 2021). This emotional well-being is also affected by their internal belief in their ability. Self-efficacy can also buffer against negative emotion because it influences one's perception when facing challenges (Yagil et al., 2023). In short, both servant leadership and self-efficacy can positively influence performance through work stress.

All of this research's findings support the hypotheses stated in this research. However, some of the paths are not statistically significant. According to Visentin et al. (2020), statistical insignificance can be caused by small effect size, or small sample size. In this study, for example, the path coefficient of servant leadership to performance is 0.013 and the





p-value is 0.465. Because the value is close to 0, the effect size can be considered small. Due to that fact, a larger sample size might increase the significance of this effect.

The present study highlights the importance of fostering self-efficacy and reducing stress to maintain or even improve teachers' performance. As a leader, the principals with the school management have an ability to increase teacher's performance by encouraging higher self-efficacy in the teachers. For example, coaching and mentoring would be a good way to increase the teacher's skills, so they can be more confident in their work. School management could also empower the teachers, giving them room for creativity and developing their own skills. Another way is to pay attention to the teachers' well-being. The school management should care more for the teachers' professional and personal growth, by building good personal relationships with each teacher. That being the case, servant leadership attitudes are recommended. Leaders with these attitudes will show genuine care for the teachers and will empower them to be confident workers.

### **Conclusion**

This research reveals that servant leadership has a positive but not statistically significant effect on performance. Moreover, self-efficacy has a positive and statistically significant effect on performance. On the other hand, work stress negatively influences performance, although not statistically significant. Meanwhile, servant leadership is found to have a statistically significant negative effect on work stress. The same happens with self-efficacy, which also shows significant negative effects on work stress. Lastly, work stress is found to mediate the positive effect of servant leadership on performance, although not statistically significant. Not only that, work stress also mediates the positive effect of self-efficacy on performance.

### **Recommendation**

It is advised that policy makers and school administrators give teachers' well-being more consideration. The professional and personal development of teachers should be a priority for leaders. For instance, principals ought to set aside time to hear about the challenges and goals of the teachers and work with them to find solutions. As a result, teachers would perform better since their stress levels would be lower. In addition to providing support, leaders ought to empower teachers by granting them sufficient independence to accomplish their duties. Teachers would be more self-assured and ultimately more driven to give their best work when their leaders have faith in their talents.

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