

Conceptualisation of servant leadership in the Samoan teacher education context

Abstract

This qualitative case study seeks to understand the conceptualisation and application of Greenleaf's servant leadership attributes of participants at the Faculty of Education (FOE) of the National University of Samoa (NUS). At present, studies on servant leadership conducted in education systems and institutions demonstrate a positive relationship between servant leadership and school climate, principals' school management, student achievement and interdependency. It is an indication of a growing interest in the concept and its practical application to the workplace. Previous research on servant leadership had been confined to the business arena.

Keywords: leadership, education, conceptualisation, servant

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Introduction

To satisfy the purpose of the study, questions probed faculty members' understanding of servant leadership and its philosophical underpinnings, the practice of servant leadership and the role of care and service as an integral part of efficacious practice. Faculty members servant leadership attributes were scrutinised in the context of Samoa's tertiary institution.¹

Identified Samoan leadership approaches and concepts were used to draw parallels with the servant leadership characteristics and how they contribute to effective teaching. This focused on servant leadership characteristics and its impact on faculty members' practice.²⁻⁸

Methodology

The qualitative study gathered participants' direct experience and application in the workplace not readily available through a survey or experimental research design.⁹⁻¹³ Denzin and Lincoln¹⁴ explain qualitative research as "a situated activity that locates the observer in the world involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world to make sense of, or interpret phenomenon in terms of meanings people bring to them" (p. 3). In the investigation of faculty members' servant leadership attributes, a workshop, interviews, Talanoa^{15,16} sessions and focus group discussions revealed information on participants' perceptions of the processes utilised. Creswell¹⁷ added that it involves "the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that establishes patterns and themes" (p. 44).

The case study involves purposive sampling "because it exhibits characteristics of interest to the researcher".¹⁸ Subsequently, the selection of participants such as faculty members, the focus group

€ Research questions, interpretations and accompanying themes

and Samoan scholars was explicitly targeted to advance the course of study. This was deemed appropriate as it provided a holistic and comprehensive understanding of faculty members' viewpoints, perceptions, practices and repertoire of servant leadership attributes in teaching and learning.

The study's theoretical position

In this investigation, Greenleaf's servant leadership theory based on the ten characteristics deduced from his writing: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualisation, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people and building community were essential elements of the leader that serves first. The indigenous organic Samoan leadership approaches of tofa manino (clarity of thought), tofa mamao (visionary), tofa saili, (quest for truth) tofa loloto (depth of thought), tofa fetala'i (open-minded), tomanatu (reflective practice) and soalaupule (distribution of power) were indicative of congruency.

Findings

The purpose of the study explored faculty members' conceptualisation of servant leadership at the FOE in Samoa and the influence of western and organic Samoan leadership on effective practice. The main research questions that guided the investigation were threefold; firstly, faculty members' conceptualisation of servant leadership; secondly, faculty members servant leadership practice and; thirdly, how western leadership approaches learned by faculty members influence their indigenous organic Samoan approaches to educational leadership.

Findings were presented using a question-by-question basis. The categorisations and interpretation Table 1 evolved from the data that specifically targeted the research questions.

Research questions	Interpretations	Accompanying themes
RQ1	What are faculty members' conceptions of servant leadership? Faculty members' ideas of servant leadership.	Theme A: Exemplary models. Theme B: Effective facilitation. Theme C: Mentoring. Theme D: Teamwork, collaboration and cooperation. Theme E: Empowerment. Theme F: Developing followers.

Table Continued....

Research questions	Interpretations	Accompanying themes
RQ2	<p>What are the implications of servant leadership in the caring and service dimensions of teaching and learning?</p> <p>Servant leadership classification into two dimensions implies teachers' practice. The attributes of listening, empathy, healing, awareness and persuasion (caring dimension), are requisites for conceptualisation, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of others and building community (service dimension), which focus on individual development, relationship with others, people development and future directions.</p>	<p>Theme A: Listening, empathy and healing recognise that people need to know they are valued and respected.</p> <p>Theme B: Awareness and persuasion indicate that one is extremely conscious of the changes in the environment and the necessity to be persuasive.</p> <p>Theme C: Conceptualization, foresight and stewardship focus on purpose, a vision of the future and how to get there. It involves modelling, facilitation, mentoring, empowerment, taking responsibility and accountability.</p> <p>Theme D: Commitment to the growth of others and building community target people investment as investing in the community. The role of developing followers and the productive application of teamwork and collaboration are essential.</p>
RQ3	<p>What is the effect of western leadership approaches on Samoan indigenous organic leadership approaches?</p> <p>Faculty members perceive this conflict as two worlds colliding.</p> <p>A struggle of values perceived as western-oriented versus indigenous and cultural approaches that influence the perception of critical thinking, and the language issue.</p>	<p>Theme A: Conflict of values as perceived in the indigenous organic versus western foci.</p> <p>Theme B: Concept of critical thinking.</p> <p>Theme C: The language barrier.</p>

Research questions and findings

Research Question 1. What are faculty members' conceptions of servant leadership?

Six themes emerged from the data: exemplary models; effective facilitation; mentoring; teamwork, collaboration and cooperation; empowerment of others and developing followers. At the macro level, participants perceived developing followers as a paradigm shift in modelling, facilitation, mentoring, collaboration and empowerment at the micro-level.

Theme A: Exemplary models: Advocating for the prototypical teacher graduate goes further than articulation and faculty members', actions, behaviour, attitudes and values set the standard that teacher graduates follow. Participants considered their role as exemplary, effective models of the institution to be a guiding principle. Participant 1 equated role modelling to nurturing a plant that is continuously being watered demonstrating the need to be consistent in one's practice. They are the ones students find credible and believable, and as Participant 2 commented, exemplary models are those that think for themselves. It also involves character building, and Participant 3 reiterated exemplary models' philosophies, values and beliefs that are deeply entrenched in students psyche through continuous exposure. Participant 4 made the point the most powerful leader is the leader who serves as exemplary role models; demonstrate and serve students by listening; making them aware of local and global developments, engage them in conceptualizing ideas for personal development and to serve others.

Theme B: Effective facilitation: Faculty members' perceived facilitation as generating innovative opportunities to enhance learning. Promotion of teacher graduates understanding was recognised in increased student morale, enjoyment, attitudinal change, the guiding process and opening possibilities for interpretation. Participant 5

alleged effective facilitation has to start with understanding learners' prior knowledge. Participant 2 also noted that students attitude change when their beliefs and backgrounds are an integral part of the teaching approaches. Participant 6 added it is when students taking control of their learning to become confident and independent learners. Effective facilitation encourages multifarious possibilities for interpretations and advances inspiration for teacher graduates to define and redefine ways of looking and seeing.

Theme C: Mentoring: Faculty members indicated generating innovative opportunities where both the mentors and mentees have the opportunity to connect at all levels physically, mentally, emotionally and socially. Mentoring teacher graduates towards improvement in all facets of their academic life and field experience is an inspiration for growth and independence. Participant 5 understood mentoring as support for students to clarify areas they had difficulty with. For Participant 2 mentoring practice included counselling and mentoring ...to spiritually connect and assist students that emotionally needed to be heard and supported. Participant 1 attested to effective mentoring if the learner is willing to participate and learn, and the mentor is equipped with the knowledge and skills to support. Participant 6 perceived difficulties in mentoring in field supervision, as not everyone is a mentor, but teaching practice involves mentoring students for improvement, a guide to good practice, teaching knowledge and techniques.

Theme D: Teamwork, collaboration and cooperation: The influence of teamwork, collaboration and cooperation supports the cultural leadership of *soalaupule* or sharing leadership. Although the strategy opened opportunities to learn from one another, to analyse and synthesise, improve social cohesiveness, learn to reach consensus and respect dissenting views, there were challenges. Participant 5 argued that teamwork has a positive spinoff for students as a morale booster and an opportunity to work and learn from one another. Effective methods include teamwork, group work and pairing to encourage

interaction, raise the morale of other students, enjoy what they do and get the different ability students to mix and engage with each other. Participant 2 mentioned interacting with students to improve their social skills and work collaboratively. For Participant 1 students learn to respect and accept other people's views and opinions whether consensus is reached or not.

The approach lends support to faculty members' views of an integrated strategy at all levels of the hierarchical structure from teacher graduates to the higher echelons of the university.

Theme E: Empowerment: Faculty members address the invisible schism between faculty members and teacher graduates through empowerment as an entitlement. Empowering strategies are not simply rhetorical, but are meaningful, functional and interactive requiring listening, empathy and healing to offset a counterproductive mindset. Participant 2 believed faculty members can lessen or widen the gap towards student empowerment by allowing students to make mistakes and take risks. While Participant 6 emphasized delegating tasks as empowering students to grow, Participant 4 views it as inclusive of our spiritual worlds, our traditional culture and beliefs that defines who we are.

Empowerment flourishes in an enabling environment and supports indigenous organic Samoan leadership approaches.

Theme F: Developing followers: Developing followers ensured the FOE provides the education system and the schools with graduates to effectively teach in the classroom. Participants' views of followers cover the spectrum to include those they work with, students and other staff members as well. The delegation of responsibilities allows the followers to develop and make informed decisions even in the absence of a designated leader. Participant 2 discussed developing followers as being closely aligned to behaviour, attitude and practice of good models to meet deadlines, the use of language appropriately, and a paradigm shift in the way things are done. Participant 4 develop followers through monitoring students' performance and progress in music. A tutor that doesn't hear students play the wrong chord cannot teach them. Participant 3 encourages students' inspirational artwork to focus on different forms of seeing life and the world. Thus, student learning is expanded beyond visuals and graphics to application in teaching and developing critical thinking.

Subsequently, institutions and teacher education faculties nurture people to take over the reins as critical to institutional development, continuity and sustainability. The exemplary models, the more able and more empowered will confidently take educational developments further.

Research question 2. What are the implications of servant leadership in the caring and service dimensions for teaching and learning?

Faculty members' responses on the care and service dimensions of servant leadership impact teaching and learning. Four broad themes emerged encompassing the ten attributes that were foundational to the study: listening, empathy and healing; awareness and persuasion; conceptualisation, foresight and stewardship; commitment to the growth of people and building community.

Theme A: Listening, empathy and healing leadership qualities. While faculty members listened to the students this varied. For some participants listening is not just instructing students, but they also need to be heard and shown that they are valued.

Significantly, listening directs attention to achieve long term plans and goals if teachers' pay attention to students talk even when they are quiet and uncommunicative. Additionally, a participant proposed that critical listening enables staff to plug into auditory mechanisms and act as a form of learning...about another's problems, perceptions and solutions. This provides an avenue to assess, monitor and evaluate student teachers' behaviour and performance. Regarding empathy, participants defined this as the heart of the person that becomes intrinsically motivated, to feel for the students. Without empathy you cannot lead, cannot serve. Empathy is cultivated through listening, when people speak and are heard they feel connected. Healing, on the other hand, is the combination of listening and empathy. Participants commented on their role as healers to provide opportunities for students to speak and make time to listen when they talk. Another member indicated that student teachers needed to unburden, be supported and heard especially those who are completely stressed out.

Listening. Participant 5 indicated that students' growth is concomitant to faculty members' ability to listening and not merely dictate. If we are committed to the growth of people we need to listen to students, not just teachers instructing students but they also need to be heard. Participant 2 posited that listening involved modelling behaviour that students follow. I listen and take into account everyone's perspective. Listening respects and values the other person as I tend to get impatient when somebody talks too much and it is nonsensical. Participant 1 acknowledged that listening is a way to learn about students' problems, views and solutions" while Participant 6 made the point listening clarifies issues and reflecting on achieving long term plans and goals. Participant 7 also responded when I listen, I see a change in students' reaction which can also positively affect their performance in class. Participant 4 an Expressive Arts lecturer, mentioned listening in silence. In the expressive arts, listening permeates silence and those in tune can hear. The language of listening is an active part of the teaching and learning process. Participant 3 made the point that listening pivoted on other attributes such as interest, relevance and patience.

Empathy. Participant 2 believed that empathy is being internally stimulated. If you reach people's heart, they become intrinsically motivated. Faculty members' inability to connect to students' background can be debilitating. Many lecturers complain about poor student attitude and performance. In essence, faculty members are frustrated but do not connect with students that need mentoring and support. Participant 1 mentioned bonding with students and like a parent wants the best for them. Parents advise and tell us off, so we grow, develop and learn... and that is how I treat students. For Participant 4 empathy drives leading and serving. Faculty members' inability to reach out can hinder student growth. Without empathy, you cannot lead, nor serve. You cannot build on the life of students if you cannot bond with them. This is also reflected in the music students' play.

Healing. Participant 5 believed teachers are healers, that support student learning through listening. We should also be healers or counsellors that listen and provide opportunities for students to speak and give voice to their thoughts. Participant 2 recognised that sharing with students is essential for healing. Regardless of how busy I am, I make time for students to talk to me as they come with their own burdens. Tasi dealt with this by ensuring quiet students are heard. I deliberately do not choose the vocal ones in the class. I ask those that hardly talk to share. Participant 4 assisted students that are completely stressed because they have not completed assignments. Moreover,

through the expressive arts students are healed. Performing, dancing, music and art help students with problems. By telling, writing, singing, dancing and acting out their experiences, they become healed.

Participant's responses indicate listening was perceived as a critical tool for student motivation and paved the way for the other voices to be heard. Listening and empathy combined to give the ultimate comfort of healing to the voiceless and marginalised. This elevated the caring dimension to another level which presupposed effective service.

Theme B: Awareness and persuasion. Participants spoke of awareness for students that come from different backgrounds, of general knowledge that students have on western and Samoan epistemologies. It included being in tune with what is happening, that you cannot isolate yourself from social issues. Cognizant leadership are aware the problems that happened at the local, national and global levels are directly linked to what is taught in the classroom. Persuasion was viewed as a way of encouraging students to move forward and making meaningful connection, of the educational process.

Participant 5 viewed awareness as being conscious of what is happening locally and globally. It involves an awareness of students from different backgrounds and the support they need. Participant 1 advocated for student awareness of western and Samoan erudition an understanding of Western and Samoan knowledge that exist and how these are played out in society. Participant 6 referred to awareness as vigilance of what is occurring the national and international levels. It is awareness of the needs of the community, the workforce, the students, the environment and the resources. Participant 4 concurred the environment of today required awareness at all levels as, you cannot isolate yourself from the social issues and songs played during natural disaster reverberated messages of the tsunami that hit the country in 2009.

Participant 2 believed persuasion is linked to an enigmatic, compelling personality, appealing and convincing such as a "charismatic character that leads and displays persuasive powers a risk-taker making decisions on the spot and without fear". Participant 1 proposed that persuasion is linked to the ability to listen, empathise and heal all connect to persuasion as leaders imbue in students' feelings of success, achievement, and empowerment from hard work and study (August 1, 2014). Participant 6 perceived persuasion as a process, and the leader is instrumental in achieving, it takes time but is it empowering; leaders convince followers to rally (July 17, 2014). Participant 7 pointed to readily available information for people to make their choice, students are not compelled, but they have options to choose from (July 18, 2014). Participant 4 postulated students who understand what is available are likely to be won over it is not something you talk about at the beginning or the end (July 17, 2014). Subsequently, where the support was relevant and meaningful students were easily persuaded. It was the educational process that they took pride in (July 17, 2014). Participant 3 tended to be more a doer than persuader, I just do it rather than standing by while ten people decide what to do (July 15, 2014).

Theme C: Conceptualization, foresight and stewardship. This is linked to an understanding of the past, the present and the future as well as the role of responsibility and accountability.

Conceptualisation. This focused on the realisation of dreams and for faculty members a part of their shared vision. Both the teacher and learner have dreams to pursue, and faculty members can enlarge students' vision to help them become what they want to be. Participant 6 believed that a leader's ability to conceptualise and communicate the

vision is critical for success. The vision of the people involved need to be in sync with the ideas it embodies. Participant 7 went further to conceptualise what students considered a good teacher (pers. Comm. July 18, 2014). Participant 4 encouraged students in music classes to dream big to enlarge their vision and be part of a Samoan orchestra, the combo band or the chamber choir. The world is big, and in schools they can make a difference. Participant 3 believed one's role is to guide students to a more fulfilling life after university students should be given free reign and be allowed to think for themselves.

Foresight. Faculty members indicated that foresight connected what student teachers do in training to the responsibilities they would face in the classroom. References to past experiences contributed to what they have become and as one participant said I still study, read and write. This not only challenged students to succeed but even after completion of their studies, they should continue to learn. Moreover, for a changing institution changing, it is important to view what happened in the past, the current situation and how change made a difference. Participant 2 discussed her own classroom experience as paving the way for what she currently does: from the negative experiences, I have changed and developed better skills and attitudes. Participant 1 also mentioned that experience continued to support and helped to fulfil dreams. I still study, read, write, and research, browse the internet, download material, read, examine them again and write. Participant 6 comprehend changes in light of the past, the present and the future without reinventing the wheel. She claimed major changes in achieving a vision needs to consider the past, its rationale and careful study before making decisions on how to move forward... it will inform decisions for the future". Participant 4 indicated that foresight recognised current practice could impact the future as, how faculty members teach will affect how graduates will become teachers themselves".

Stewardship. With stewardship, signalled participants responsibility and accountability towards the students under their care. Participant 2 feels for the students she teaches. I am accountable as a servant, as a leader and as a teacher. I have a responsibility to nurture the students under my care. Likewise, Participant 1 added, those in our care are our responsibility and should be supported to develop and Participant 6 linked stewardship to responsible, accountable and empowered teachers, as a leader you take responsibility and pave the way for achieving the vision or it won't work. Participant 4 credited good teaching in helping students differentiate, make decisions and deal with the consequences. We nurture students' intellectual life to think and make decisions...and discuss the consequences of their actions.

Theme D: Commitment to the growth of people and building community. Participants' perceived commitment to the growth of people as ubiquitous and a measure of one's affiliation with humanity. The building of the community was seen as a positive outcome of investing in people.

References were made to contribute to personal growth and enrichment, continue to nurture values and the conscience to help student teachers develop in training. Participants also indicated effective communication and information to avoid communication breakdown as with change there is resistance. Participant 5 envisaged commitment to the growth of people as directly aligned to building community as the development of children is also our contribution to building the community. Participant 2 also made the point of teacher support as a process for student development, teachers' values and conscience; it is a process in my growth and the values I nurture. Participant 6 postulated that when changes supersede information

flow, then problems occur. Resistance is less likely to occur when the staff is well-informed and grow with the changes as with many changes there is communication breakdown, misunderstanding, frustration and resistance ...leadership needs to diffuse resistance. Participant 4 made the point that the faculty is committed to the growth of people. It contributes to the personal and professional growth of students, as we cannot isolate commitment from the growth of people as we are in the business of educating teachers.

Building community demonstrates man's belief in the future, which undergirds the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values for continuity. One participant described the skills, the spirit and attitudes as all contributing to community building. Participant 2 acknowledged that developing individuals contribute to societal improvement building an individual is an integral part of building the village and society. Likewise, Participant 1 pointed towards effective leadership as building the community where the leader's role is to guide and ensure the community develop to what we expect in the future. Participant 6 attested that education plays a pivotal role in harnessing knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and morals to community building. In addition, when an organisation or institution is situated in a community... you need excellent human resources, the skills, the knowledge and knowhow, the values and attitudes to help build a strong community and develop good citizens. Finally, Participant 4 highlighted teaching as a calling and their contribution to nation-building, many times I have said to my students they are builders of the nation...you cannot instil the pride of nation-building if you cannot listen, empathise and sympathise with students.

Commitment to personal growth and building community are relational and has implications for faculty members' classroom practice. The servant leadership characteristics, its relationship to community building and improving society are a necessity, and faculty members play an essential role in its achievement.

Research Question 3. What is the effect of Western leadership approaches on Samoan indigenous organic leadership approaches?

This question investigated participants' viewpoints, and perceptions of western leadership approaches as opposed to the indigenous organic Samoan leadership approaches. Three themes were identified: conflict of values; the concept of critical thinking and the language barrier.

Theme A: Conflict of values. Participants observed the effect of overseas influences and policies on child discipline as running counter to the cultural practice of respect and obedience.

Reference was made regarding the environment in the academic system as stilted and making it difficult to internalise what goes on in the classroom. This implied that faculty members were unable to connect academic knowledge to student teachers' prior learning experiences. One referred to academic aspirations that may contradict indigenous values creating complications at home. Another participant proffered that there is a clash of identities between two different cultures. Participants were aware of anomalies in the value systems and contexts that affect practice. However, one participant said there is nothing wrong with different sets of values as long as we understand the difference so that we can make informed decisions. Another participant argued that indigenous organic Samoan leadership approaches are incorporated in education, but these approaches should be contextualised and relevant to support teaching and learning practice.

Participant 2 described conflicting views and its effects on current practice, child discipline and rights stem from overseas influences and policies and contradict our forms of discipline. Participant 1 made the point that these values need not be contradictory but should support decision-making so we can make informed. Participant 6 believed indigenous organic Samoan leadership approaches are incorporated in education, but these have to be visibly aligned to the changes in society the leadership approaches are in our education system; the tofa mamao and the tofa manino are based on the context, the situation. Today we have to help students fit into the globalised world, but at the same time to retain what is important in the culture and their identity.

Participant 7 discussed academic learning that seemed to be discrete and isolated while in the cultural practice is integrated; it's seamless, one flows into the next.... the easiest way possible is to include attitudes and values. There is a clash of values in terms of western and cultural perspectives; in New Zealand, the teachers used to say be what you want, say what you want....but I did not want to create complications at home. Participant 4 saw this as a clash of identities and two cultures operating in society it is a clash of identities as there are two different cultures, the European context of teaching and learning and the other rooted in cultural practice where academic teaching and the cultural context have different educators and educational processes.

Theme B: Concept of critical thinking. Critical thinking is linked to higher levels of thinking and a process that one Samoan scholar referred to as continuously being cultivated in the home through cultural experience and application. It is rooted in a practice that supports decision making. Participant 2 described critical thinking as one student asking where about in the coursebook was the assignment and the response that is what critical thinking is about? Participant 2 expressed that faculty members must not think for your students, teach them how to think for themselves...however, their cultural background can have an adverse effect where being passive and not asking questions was the norm. Participant 1 believed the role of critical thinking is the key to learning and faculty members should nurture students to survive in society, academically, socially and culturally.

Participant 6 differed from the others in her perception of critical thinking and viewed Samoan culture as promoting critical thinking. It is the way students are taught in school and the language of instruction that hinder learning. I have reservations about the culture not encouraging people to think critically in the fa'asamoa, Samoan orators are quick thinkers, fast on the uptake. The reasons for the lack of critical thinking in the learning environment could be because of the way the system operates, the way the teachers teach, and English being a second language. Often teachers may not want students to ask questions, as they may not be too confident with the content being covered. It becomes a threat. However, with the fa'asamoa and how things are done, deeper learning is involved, critical thinking is involved, but it is in a context that is relevant to people.

Participant 7 also pointed to teaching strategies that students from strong cultural backgrounds are receptive to. One of the teaching tools that work so well is the use of Samoan humour and wit... it gets the message across, engages the learner and have them thinking. Participant 4 argued that faculty members need to understand the disposition of Samoan students and how they think; at FOE we are not doing it right... we want students to open up, share and speak out but when a student sits quietly saying nothing the student is labelled dumb when the student could be thinking. Teachers need to maximize and exploit student potential effectively referring to its application and

possible consequences. For example, in the ethics of teaching, teachers make decisions that have consequences...and students are expected to do likewise. Faculty members should facilitate the thinking process where student teachers figure and think through various scenarios to support decision making.

Participant 3 described students first approach to art classes; they come with a set mind already to paint, draw and sculpt the ideal human form...however, the courses are taught so they are not confined to one way of thinking, and they see how it is applied in practice. This was an attempt to get students to see art forms differently and encourage them to think in multiple ways.

Participants held different views on the nature of critical thinking which was influenced by students' background, the education system, a paradigm shift in how teachers teach and the use of Samoan wit and humour rich in satire, irony, mockery, oxymoron, and metaphor illustrating an assemblage of humour techniques as useful tools. Participants demonstrated different perceptions and interpretations of critical thinking while the Samoan scholars were familiar with the concept deeply entrenched in their Samoan cultural background.

Theme C: The language barrier. Samoans pride themselves on their culture and language. Student teachers upon entering the university are exposed to the academic language, a world apart from the familiar language of the home and the local environment. Communication in everyday English was replaced by the academic language that for most students was abstract and not related to their prior knowledge or vocabulary. This posed a real problem as students try to grapple with the theories, concepts and semantics that were not in their schema and existing framework.

Participant 5 said the appropriate use of language was important because as a leader and as a role model students need encouragement, motivating and effective language to support learning. Participant 2 reflected on the language barrier that affected FOE students. It is a concern when communication is a barrier, and for a number of FOE students, English is still an inhibiting factor when they communicate verbally and in writing. Participant 1 argued that the culture and Samoan language provide for critical thinking, but this is only attained by certain people. Samoa's oratory language is not accessible to a lot of people and requires a higher level of thinking.

In comparison to the academic world, those that have reached a higher level of education are said to practice critical thinking.

Participant 6 believed the use of the English language and concepts were a barrier to learning. The education system is in a foreign language; foreign concepts, and it is difficult to think critically because they find it hard to comprehend. Participant 7 added that the language and experience of students should be in line to support learning, if my language experience was more aligned to theirs, then I could reach them more effectively referring to the ability to bridge the language divide.

Participants indicated that the language barrier was an overwhelming obstacle in student teachers' development. One faculty member mentioned the use of effective language as an enabling stairway to understanding. Another as a process that students achieved as they immersed themselves in academic studies. Examples were drawn from the matais' language acquisition to those in the higher echelons of academia.

One participant acknowledged that students entering university were exposed to English and concepts far removed from their

understanding and thinking critically would be difficult because of the language barrier. Another mentioned that faculty members and student teachers should share everyday experiences to bridge the language gap. One participant acknowledged the reality of the situation as being here but not there. This pointed to faculty members expectations of student teachers entering the world of faculty members and the language used but not the other way round.

Conclusion

The research questions and accompanying themes addressed the issue and the purpose of the study. Specifically, the qualitative case study sought to understand faculty members' conceptualisation of servant leadership and the influence of western and indigenous organic Samoan leadership approaches on efficacy and practice. The first research question converged on servant leadership styles that were prevalent at the FOE. Participants identified leadership styles focusing on care and service which were seen as quintessential in the mentoring, empowerment and development of student teachers. Faculty members indicated modelling as necessary in their practice. Transference of leadership skills was varied, but for participants, it was the ability to make a difference. The caring and serving dimensions of servant leadership are pertinent for its facilitation.

Servant leadership resonated well with faculty members at the FOE as the approach share similar values, beliefs, knowledge and skills with culturally experience and expectations. Participant felt that servant leadership could a challenging to achieve. Differences in faculty members' perceptions of servant leadership and indigenous organic Samoan leadership were reviewed and perceived as compatible.

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Conflicts of interest

There are no direct or indirect conflicts declared by author.

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