A STUDY ON LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS IN SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION TEAMS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP TEORY:
A FOCUS ON TEACHER SATISFATION AND TEAM COHESION

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AN INDEPENDENT STUDY SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS SIAM UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

Amid ongoing educational reforms and shifts in educational management, school leadership styles are undergoing notable transformation. Servant leadership—centered on people-first values, support for subordinates, and team empowerment—has gained increasing attention in school contexts. Within this framework, teacher satisfaction and team cohesion have emerged as key determinants of effective school teams.The objectives of this study were to examine the influence of servant leadership on teacher satisfaction, to investigate how satisfaction affects team cohesion, and to explore the mediating role of satisfaction in the relationship between servant leadership and team cohesion.This study adopted a quantitative research design and employed structured questionnaires to collect data from teachers at Jianping High School in Shanghai. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed, and 185 valid responses were received. The sample represented teaching staff across different departments and grade levels. Data were analyzed using statistical modeling to test the hypothesized influence path: "Servant Leadership → Teacher Satisfaction → Team Cohesion."

The findings reveal that: (1) servant leadership behavior demonstrated by principals and middle-level leaders significantly enhanced teacher satisfaction; (2) teacher satisfaction positively contributed to the development of team cohesion; and (3) servant leadership behavior indirectly strengthened team cohesion through its effect on satisfaction, with the mediating role statistically confirmed.The study concludes that servant leadership plays a critical role in fostering teacher satisfaction and team cohesion in schools. To institutionalize this model, schools should integrate service, empowerment, and collaboration into management practices, use diagnostic tools to guide adjustments, and establish supportive communication platforms. Evaluation systems should recognize service-oriented behaviors, and targeted training can help sustain the model. These measures embed servant leadership as a sustainable framework that enhances teacher satisfaction, team cohesion, and organizational effectiveness.

Keywords: secondary school education, servant leadership behavior, teacher satisfaction, team cohesion

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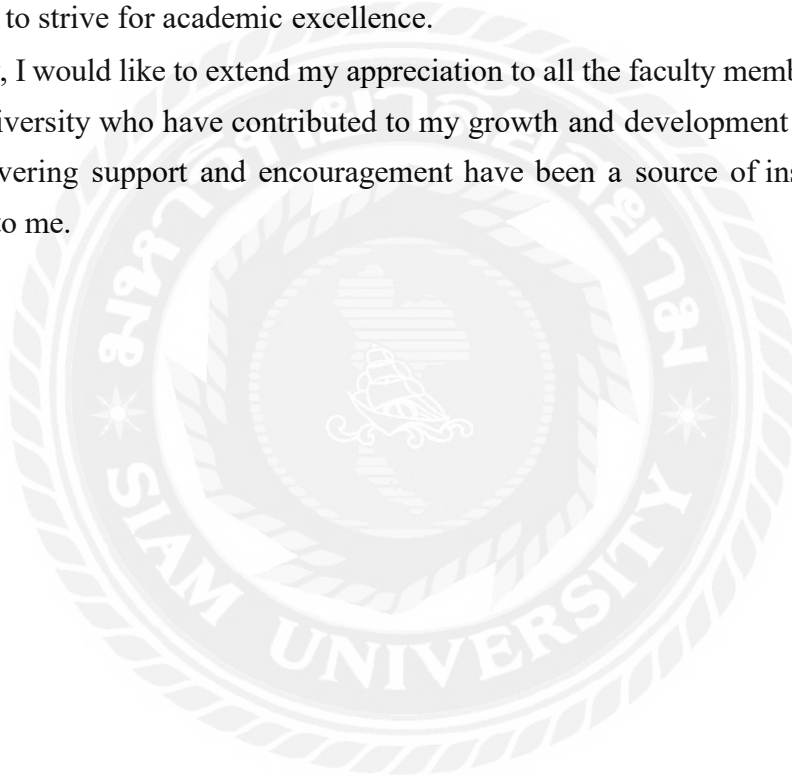
DECLARATION

I, Li Daiyipei, hereby declare that this Independent Study entitled " A Study on Leadership Effective in Secondary School Education Teams from the Perspective of Servant Leadership Theory: A Focus on Teacher Satisfaction and Team Cohesion" is an original work and has never been submitted to any academic institution for a degree.
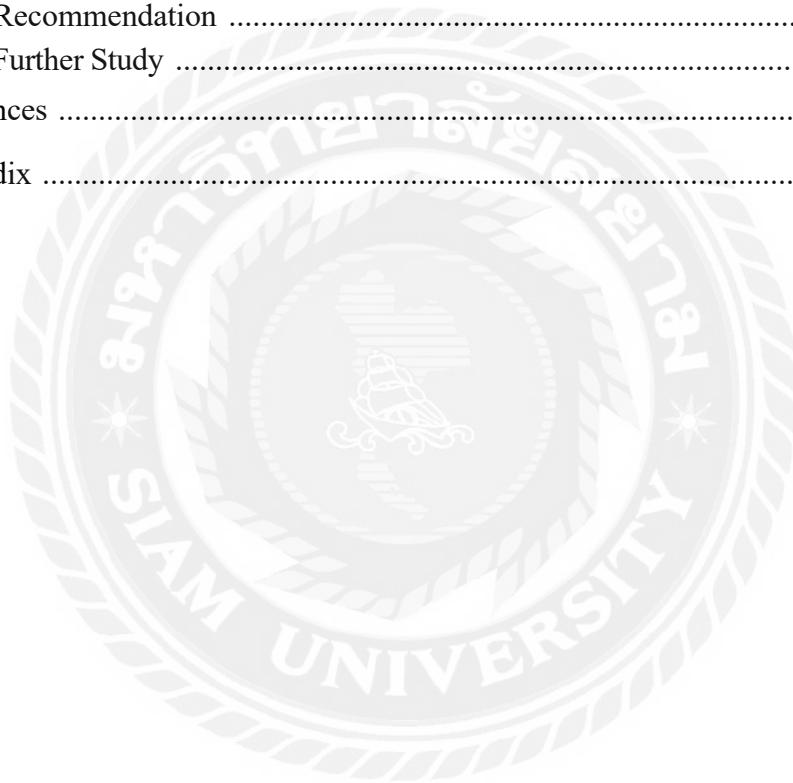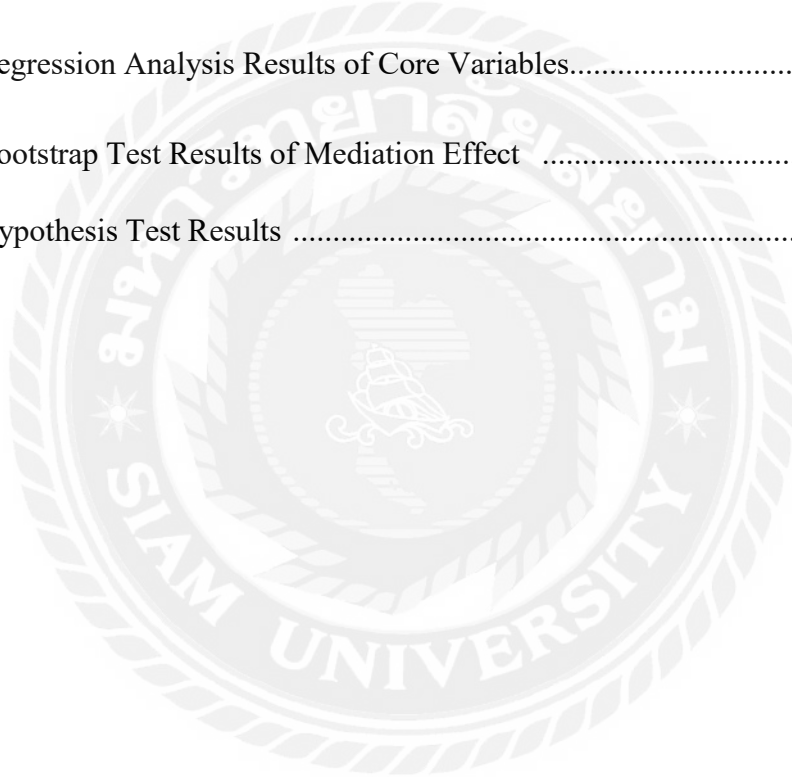
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1.1 Background of the Study

As China advances educational modernization through the "Double Reduction" policy, curriculum reform, and quality-oriented initiatives, school governance is shifting toward service and empowerment (Ministry of Education, 2021). These reforms aim to reduce excessive academic burdens on students, improve teaching quality, and promote holistic development. At the same time, policies emphasize enhancing teachers' professional development and work well-being, thereby laying a solid foundation for sustainable school development. In particular, the Ministry of Education's 2015 policy document *Opinions on Deepening the Separation of Management, Operation, and Evaluation to Promote the Transformation of Government Functions* explicitly states the need to strengthen teacher participation, enhance school autonomy, and establish evaluation mechanisms that improve teacher satisfaction and teaching quality (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2015). This policy provides an institutional basis for transforming school leadership, promoting a shift from control-oriented approaches to service-oriented models that encourage empowerment, collaboration, and participatory governance.

Leadership plays a critical role in shaping teacher identity, satisfaction, and team cohesion. Traditional task-oriented leadership often focuses on administrative and instructional tasks but tends to overlook teachers' emotional and professional needs, resulting in decreased motivation, reduced engagement, and limited collaboration (Chen, 2018; Li, 2020). This challenge is especially significant in the context of rapid educational reform and changing educational environments, where teachers face growing demands for innovation, adaptability, and professional growth. Thus, schools urgently require a leadership model that addresses both practical requirements and emotional needs, in order to enhance teachers' sense of belonging, satisfaction, and organizational commitment.

Servant leadership, as a model centered on empathy, listening, stewardship, and shared decision-making (Greenleaf, 1977; Liden et al., 2008), offers such a pathway. Empirical studies have demonstrated that servant leadership significantly improves teacher satisfaction, work engagement, and team innovation (Eva et al., 2019; Van Dierendonck, 2011). In school contexts, servant leadership aligns with policy trends toward empowerment and participatory governance, fostering trust, improving teacher morale, and enhancing team cohesion. It also meets current demands for inclusive, collaborative, and emotionally supportive school environments, contributing to the construction of a positive school culture and sustainable organizational development.

Based on this, this study selected Jianping High School in Shanghai as a case site and constructed the influence path model "Servant Leadership → Teacher Satisfaction → Team Cohesion" to explore how servant leadership shapes teacher satisfaction and, in turn, strengthens team cohesion. The aim is to provide both theoretical insights and practical strategies for cultivating collaborative, resilient teaching communities, thereby supporting sustainable school development in the context of ongoing educational reform.

1.2 Questions of the Study

This study aims to explore the relationships among servant leadership, teacher satisfaction, and team cohesion within the context of contemporary secondary school management. In the current era of rapid educational reform, schools face increasing demands for both teaching quality and organizational resilience. Leadership styles significantly influence teacher morale, professional engagement, and collaborative capacity, making it essential to examine their effects systematically. Servant leadership, with its emphasis on empathy, empowerment, and shared decision-making, has been suggested as a promising approach, yet empirical evidence of its impact in educational settings remains limited. This study addresses this gap by investigating how servant leadership affects teacher satisfaction and whether satisfaction in turn fosters stronger team cohesion.

(1)What is the impact of servant leadership behavior on teacher satisfaction?

(2) Does teacher satisfaction influence team cohesion?

(3) Does teacher satisfaction have a mediating effect on the relationship between servant leadership and team cohesion?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the practical role of servant leadership in secondary school settings and to explore how it enhanced teacher satisfaction and, in turn, promote team cohesion. In the context of ongoing educational reform, school leaders need effective management approaches to address teacher stress, improve teaching quality, and foster a positive team culture. Jianping High School in Shanghai was selected as the case study due to its representativeness in promoting school governance reform and teacher development, as well as the typicality and research value of its servant leadership practices. The objectives of this study are set as follows:

(1)To explore the impact of servant leadership behavior on teacher satisfaction in secondary schools.

(2)To explore the impact of teacher satisfaction on team cohesion in educational organizations.

(3)To explore the mediating role of teacher satisfaction in the relationship between servant leadership behavior and team cohesion.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study targeted full-time, officially appointed teachers at Jianping High School, a top public secondary school in Shanghai. Using stratified random sampling, 185 valid responses were collected across varying tenures, ranks, and subjects.
Focusing on three core variables—servant leadership, teacher satisfaction, and team cohesion—the study examined the direct effects of leadership on satisfaction, the impact of satisfaction on cohesion, and its mediating role. Alternative leadership models are excluded to ensure conceptual focus.

Grounded in Greenleaf's Servant Leadership Theory and literature on organizational behavior, the research adopts a quantitative design. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire.

Between March and May 2025, data were obtained via a secure online platform. Analysis was conducted using SPSS, applying correlation and multiple regression techniques to identify relational patterns and explore the mechanisms through which leadership shapes teacher satisfaction and team cohesion.

1.5 Significance of the Study

1.5.1 Theoretical Significance

At the theoretical level, this study carries important significance. By examining the path model of "Servant Leadership → Teacher Satisfaction → Team Cohesion," the findings lend further support to the view that leadership behaviors may exert notable influence on teachers' experiences and team dynamics. In doing so, the study reinforces the relevance of Greenleaf's (1977) servant leadership framework within educational settings. It also highlights the mediating role of teacher satisfaction, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which leadership behaviors may affect organizational outcomes, while enriching research on teacher motivation, professional identity, and organizational behavior. Furthermore, by introducing the theoretical exploration of servant leadership into the context of Chinese

secondary education, this study provides empirical evidence that suggests its potential cross-cultural applicability, extending related discussions from business and corporate management to the unique environment of schools.

1.5.2 Practical Significance

On a practical level, this study, drawing on empirical data from Jianping High School in Shanghai, offers insights that may inform school leadership practices. The results indicate that servant leadership, through fostering trust, providing emotional support, and strengthening teachers' sense of responsibility, has the potential to enhance teacher satisfaction and, through emotional alignment and organizational commitment, further promote team cohesion. These findings point to the importance of adopting a people-centered approach in school governance. The study also offers practical implications for ongoing educational leadership reforms, suggesting that schools may benefit from institutionalizing supportive leadership behaviors, establishing open communication channels, expanding teacher participation, and cultivating a collaborative school culture. Taken together, such measures not only contribute to improving team performance and organizational resilience but also provide practical guidance for the development of professional learning communities, thereby supporting the sustainable development of educational organizations.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

Servant Leadership

In this study, servant leadership refers to a leadership style in which school leaders attend to teachers' needs, provide support and guidance, empower teachers, and promote team collaboration. It is measured through a questionnaire including dimensions of emotional support, listening to teachers' opinions, fostering professional development, and team-oriented behaviors, aimed at quantifying principals' and middle -level leaders' leadership practices.

Teacher Satisfaction

Teacher satisfaction refers to teachers' subjective feelings of contentment and recognition regarding their work environment, leadership support, working conditions, and professional achievements. In this study, it is measured through a questionnaire assessing overall work satisfaction, including recognition of leadership behaviors, emotional experiences at work, and satisfaction with the team atmosphere, to evaluate the impact of leadership behavior on teacher satisfaction.

Team Cohesion

Team cohesion refers to the degree of mutual recognition and willingness to collaborate among members of a teaching team in terms of goals, responsibilities, and emotional connection. In this study, it is measured through a questionnaire evaluating

teachers' perceptions of team collaboration, trust, support, and shared goal recognition, reflecting the overall cohesion of the team.

Case School: Jianping High School

Jianping High School, located in Shanghai, is the case school for this study. As a representative public senior secondary school engaged in educational reform and leadership practices, it was selected as the research site to examine the impact of servant leadership on teacher satisfaction and team cohesion.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

This chapter established a solid theoretical foundation for the study through a systematic review and analysis of existing research, while further examining the meanings and interrelationships of key variables including servant leadership, teacher satisfaction, and team cohesion. The literature review covers the concept of servant leadership, its core characteristics, and its application in educational contexts; the definition of teacher satisfaction, its influencing factors, and its significance in school organizations; the concept and dimensions of team cohesion and its impact on organizational effectiveness; as well as the relationships and interaction mechanisms among these three variables. In addition, this chapter clearly defines the key variables of the study, including the operational definitions of servant leadership, teacher satisfaction, and team cohesion, ensuring clarity and measurability of the research variables and providing a solid basis for the research design and data analysis.

2.1 Servant Leadership Theory

2.1.1 Origin and Development of Servant Leadership

Servant leadership was first proposed by Robert K. Greenleaf in 1977, representing a shift from traditional hierarchical, authority-centered leadership toward a people-centered leadership philosophy. Greenleaf argued that the fundamental purpose of leadership is to serve others, rather than merely wield power or achieve organizational goals. This concept addresses the limitations of traditional leadership models, which often emphasize control, task completion, and top-down decision-making, while neglecting employee growth, well-being, and intrinsic motivation. Servant leadership positions leaders as facilitators rather than commanders, emphasizing the moral and ethical responsibilities of leaders in fostering trust, collaboration, and mutual respect (Greenleaf, 1977).

Following Greenleaf's pioneering work, scholars have expanded and operationalized this concept to enable empirical research in various organizational contexts. Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) proposed key dimensions of servant leadership, including altruistic calling, emotional healing, wisdom, persuasive mapping, and organizational stewardship, forming a multidimensional framework encompassing servant leadership's behaviors and attitudes. Liden et al. (2008) further refined this model by introducing five dimensions: emotional healing, conceptual skills, putting followers first, helping followers grow and succeed, and behaving ethically. These dimensions provide a robust basis for systematically measuring and evaluating servant leadership. Their work facilitated the development of survey tools and scales that allow researchers to explore the relationships between servant leadership, employee satisfaction, commitment, and team performance.

In recent years, servant leadership has attracted increasing attention across business, healthcare, and education sectors. Studies suggest that servant leadership significantly enhances employee motivation, organizational citizenship behavior, and innovation, largely due to its emphasis on empathy, empowerment, and ethical management (Eva et al., 2019; Liden et al., 2008). In the educational context, servant leadership embodies a humanistic management philosophy, wherein leaders prioritize teachers' professional development and well-being, and promote collaborative and participatory decision-making (Parris & Peachey, 2013). However, scholars note that the implementation of servant leadership is strongly influenced by contextual factors, as cultural norms, organizational structures, and societal expectations can affect its effectiveness (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002).

In China, the application of servant leadership in secondary education is shaped by hierarchical cultural traditions. Although teachers value its emphasis on fairness, empathy, and support, rigid organizational structures and formal reporting systems often limit leaders' ability to fully implement servant behaviors (Yang, 2020). Nevertheless, empirical research indicates that servant leadership helps enhance teacher engagement, reduce stress, and foster psychological safety (Wang, 2020; Li, 2021). This suggests that servant leadership is both universal and adaptable, underlining the need for culturally tailored models in educational settings.

Overall, the evolution of servant leadership reflects a continuous shift toward ethical, relational, and people-centered leadership practices. From its origins as a philosophical concept to its development as an empirically supported framework, servant leadership enables scholars and practitioners to systematically examine its mechanisms and effects. Extensive literature demonstrates a significant relationship between servant leadership and improvements in teacher satisfaction, team cohesion, and organizational effectiveness, making it a highly relevant perspective for investigating contemporary secondary school leadership.

2.1.2 Core Principles of Servant Leadership

Servant leadership is characterized by a set of interrelated principles that collectively emphasize serving others, fostering growth, and building trust and collaboration. The first principle is empathy—the leader's ability to understand and share the perspectives, emotions, and experiences of followers. Empathy enables leaders to effectively respond to individual needs and challenges, fostering psychological well-being and trust within teams (Liden et al., 2008; Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). In the educational context, empathy allows leaders to address teachers' professional and personal pressures and create an inclusive environment that encourages engagement and initiative.

The second principle is listening, which requires leaders to actively attend to and value the voices of followers. Listening involves not merely receiving information but

interpreting, understanding, and responding to concerns in ways that show respect for teachers' experiences (Greenleaf, 1977; Spears, 1995). In schools, listening can take the form of formal feedback sessions, open discussions, or daily dialogue, fostering teacher participation in decision-making and creating open communication channels.

Empowerment is the third core principle, referring to leaders' efforts to provide autonomy, resources, and opportunities for professional growth. Empowerment encourages employees to take ownership of their work, develop skills, and embrace responsibility (Liden et al., 2008; Chiniara & Bentein, 2016). In schools, empowerment may involve granting teachers autonomy over curriculum design, involving them in school improvement projects, or providing mentorship and leadership opportunities. These practices are closely associated with higher job satisfaction, self-efficacy, and professional commitment, highlighting empowerment's role in cultivating effective teams.

Humility is another essential principle of servant leadership. It involves leaders recognizing their own limitations, seeking feedback, and prioritizing others' well-being above personal interests (Eva et al., 2019). Humble leaders foster trust, reduce hierarchical barriers, model collaboration, and strengthen shared responsibility and common purpose. In school leadership, humility contributes to credibility and enhances the quality of interactions between teachers and leaders.

Beyond these core principles, servant leadership also emphasizes ethical behavior, organizational stewardship, and long-term concern, requiring leaders to balance task achievement with the holistic growth of followers (Parris & Peachey, 2013). This integrative approach distinguishes servant leadership from other leadership models by focusing not only on performance but also on relationships and moral values.

Empirical research supports the efficacy of these principles. Servant leadership behaviors demonstrating empathy, listening, empowerment, and humility are strongly associated with enhanced trust, increased organizational citizenship behavior, higher job satisfaction, and stronger team cohesion (Liden et al., 2008; Eva et al., 2019). In the educational field, these principles contribute to cultivating a positive leadership culture, increasing teacher engagement, and fostering collaboration, thereby improving students' learning outcomes and promoting sustainable school development.

2.1.3 Application of Servant Leadership in Secondary Education

In the secondary education context, the practice of servant leadership is particularly important due to the complexity of disciplines, high demands for teacher professional development, and significant individual differences among students. These characteristics place higher requirements on school leaders for service and coordination. Servant leadership aligns closely with humanistic management, positioning leaders as supporters and facilitators rather than mere directive authorities

(Black, 2010; Parris & Peachey, 2013). In secondary schools, servant leadership not only supports teachers but also acts as a key driver for improving teaching quality and advancing school development.

Research shows that servant leadership enhances teachers' job satisfaction, trust, and team commitment, thereby strengthening cohesion and collaboration within teaching teams (Eva et al., 2019; Liden et al., 2008). In secondary schools, where teachers face complex subject content, demanding curricula, and diverse student needs, emotional support and empowerment from leaders become particularly critical. For example, in the context of curriculum reform, teachers often face pressures related to instructional changes, adjustments in lesson schedules, and innovation in teaching methods. Principals and academic leaders who listen to teachers' opinions, grant autonomy in curriculum design, and provide professional development opportunities can effectively alleviate these pressures and enhance satisfaction (Wang, 2020; Li, 2021).

In recent years, China's educational reforms, such as the "Double Reduction" policy and sustained emphasis on teacher professional development, require secondary school leaders to increasingly emphasize servant leadership practices (Ministry of Education, 2021). These reforms not only require schools to reduce students' academic burdens but also to provide higher-quality teaching and management support, creating opportunities for servant leadership to flourish. School leaders must balance teaching, administration, and teacher care, which demands empathy, listening skills, and empowerment capacity to promote teacher engagement and innovation.

Practical servant leadership in secondary schools includes offering mentorship to new teachers to help them adapt quickly; establishing mechanisms for teacher involvement in curriculum reform and school decision-making to strengthen belonging; holding regular teacher exchange and reflection meetings to encourage communication; and distributing teaching tasks fairly while paying attention to teachers' workloads and mental health. These measures contribute to creating a teacher-centered support culture that fosters professional growth and team effectiveness (Parris & Peachey, 2013; Zhang et al., 2023).

Moreover, servant leadership can indirectly influence students' learning experiences and outcomes. At the secondary level, teacher satisfaction is closely linked to teaching quality, which directly affects student learning. By creating a supportive atmosphere, building trust, and encouraging innovation, servant leadership can enhance teachers' motivation and creativity, thereby promoting students' comprehensive development (Tschannen-Moran, 2001). Thus, in the secondary education context, servant leadership is not only a pathway to enhancing teacher satisfaction and team cohesion but also a strategic choice for achieving sustainable school development.

In summary, introducing servant leadership into secondary school management can improve teacher job satisfaction and team collaboration while enhancing the overall quality of school governance. It provides a solid theoretical and practical foundation for building a teacher-centered, collaborative, and sustainable secondary education system.

2.2 Teacher Satisfaction

2.2.1 Definition and Theoretical Basis of Teacher Satisfaction

Teacher satisfaction is a significant variable in educational research, generally regarded as the subjective evaluation by teachers of their work experiences and emotional states. Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction as a positive emotional response that an individual experiences when evaluating their job or job experiences, providing a foundational perspective for subsequent studies. In the educational context, teacher satisfaction encompasses not only teachers' emotional experiences toward their work but also reflects their psychological well-being and the overall functioning of the school organization.

Further, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2010) proposed five dimensions of teacher satisfaction, which provide a comprehensive framework for understanding this concept in schools:

Work Content refers to the tasks and responsibilities teachers undertake in classroom teaching and school work. This includes the professional nature of the curriculum, the quality of classroom interaction, and the level of challenge and interest in teaching tasks. The richness and meaningfulness of work content directly affect teachers' engagement and emotional identification with their profession. Innovative and autonomous curriculum design, for example, can enhance teachers' sense of professional accomplishment (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010).

Organizational Systems relate to the norms and operations within a school, including management policies, evaluation, promotion, and institutional regulations. Fair and transparent systems can enhance teachers' sense of security and satisfaction, whereas the lack of institutional guarantees may lead to dissatisfaction and burnout (Dinham & Scott, 2000). Effective performance evaluation, clear communication channels, and fair promotion opportunities are important components of organizational systems.

Relationships refer to the quality of interactions among teachers and between teachers and school leaders. This dimension emphasizes cooperation, support, and trust building. Good collegial relationships can create a positive working atmosphere,

reduce conflict, and improve collaboration efficiency, thereby enhancing teachers' job satisfaction (Tschannen-Moran, 2001).

Professional Growth includes opportunities for teachers to develop their teaching skills, subject knowledge, and professional capabilities. This encompasses training, further education, participation in educational research, and engagement in curriculum reform. Rich professional development resources can stimulate teachers' enthusiasm for learning and increase their job satisfaction (Dinham & Scott, 2000).

Job Security refers to teachers' subjective sense of career stability and prospects. This includes confidence in contract stability, occupational continuity, and personal career advancement. Teachers with strong job security are more likely to invest in their work and develop long-term professional commitment, whereas insecurity can increase turnover and decrease satisfaction (Locke, 1976).

This dimensional perspective highlights that teacher satisfaction is a multifaceted construct, influenced both by external organizational factors and internal psychological perceptions. Therefore, teacher satisfaction is not only an indicator of individual well-being but also a crucial measure of the quality of organizational operations in education.

2.2.2 Determinants of Teacher Satisfaction

Scholars generally agree that teacher satisfaction is influenced by multiple interrelated factors, among which leadership support, work autonomy, access to resources, and work environment and interpersonal relationships are key determinants (Dinham & Scott, 2000; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). These factors interact with each other and jointly shape teachers' professional experiences and psychological states.

First, leadership support is regarded as one of the core determinants of teacher satisfaction. Leadership support encompasses not only guidance in daily teaching management but also emotional care, professional assistance, and fair decision-making. Research shows that when teachers perceive recognition, active listening, and practical support from leaders, they are more likely to develop trust and a sense of belonging within the organization (Dinham & Scott, 2000). Such support can alleviate occupational stress, enhance teachers' work engagement, and significantly improve job satisfaction. In the context of secondary schools, leadership support from principals and department heads plays a crucial role in influencing teachers' daily satisfaction and long-term career development.

Second, work autonomy is an important factor in enhancing teacher satisfaction. Work autonomy refers to the degree of freedom teachers have in curriculum design,

choice of teaching methods, classroom management, and evaluation approaches. This autonomy not only satisfies teachers' needs for self-actualization but also strengthens their professional identity (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). Teachers with higher autonomy tend to demonstrate greater creativity and initiative, and are more willing to engage in curriculum innovation and educational research, further enhancing team collaboration.

Third, access to resources significantly affects teacher satisfaction. Resources include not only tangible teaching facilities and financial support but also professional development opportunities, training programs, and access to educational information. When teachers have adequate resources, they can enhance classroom effectiveness and build greater confidence in their professional growth (Dinham & Scott, 2000). In secondary schools, resource availability is particularly important for interdisciplinary curriculum development, school-based training, and extracurricular teaching activities, all of which directly impact teachers' satisfaction and sense of achievement.

Finally, work environment and interpersonal relationships form an essential basis for maintaining teacher satisfaction. The work environment includes not only physical space and teaching conditions but also the cultural atmosphere and management systems of the school. A positive work environment should be safe, supportive, and motivating, while positive interpersonal relationships mean effective communication, collaboration, and mutual support among teachers (Dinham & Scott, 2000). Harmonious colleague relationships help reduce occupational stress, enhance teachers' professional identity, and foster a positive team culture, thereby improving overall satisfaction.

2.2.3 Importance of Teacher Satisfaction in Education

Teacher satisfaction has profound implications for education quality and school development. First, it is closely related to teaching quality and student learning outcomes. Research shows that highly satisfied teachers tend to be more enthusiastic and creative in the classroom, effectively stimulating students' interest and learning achievement (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010).

Second, teacher satisfaction plays a critical role in professional development and occupational identity. Satisfied teachers are more willing to engage in school-based research and educational reform, and they demonstrate greater motivation for continuous learning and self-improvement (Dinham & Scott, 2000). Satisfaction nurtures a sense of professional pride, which strengthens teachers' commitment to their work and their school.

At the organizational level, teacher satisfaction is closely linked to overall school performance. Organ (1997) suggested that employee satisfaction could promote

organizational citizenship behavior, thereby enhancing organizational performance. In an educational context, improving teacher satisfaction not only enhances teaching quality but also promotes collaboration and knowledge sharing among teachers, fostering a positive school culture and effective organizational functioning.

2.2.4 Mechanisms of Servant Leadership Theory Impact on Teacher Satisfaction

Existing studies indicate that servant leadership influences teacher satisfaction through multiple mechanisms. Chiniara and Bentein (2016) found that servant leadership behaviors—such as demonstrating empathy, attentive listening, and empowering subordinates—effectively satisfy teachers' basic psychological needs, thereby enhancing their occupational well-being.

Eva et al. (2019), in their systematic review, further suggested that servant leadership fosters trust and psychological safety, allowing teachers to feel respected and supported in their work, which positively influences their emotional state and professional identity. Specifically, when leaders distribute tasks fairly and demonstrate care in daily management, they are more likely to enhance teachers' sense of belonging and satisfaction.

In the secondary school context, practical applications of servant leadership commonly cited in the literature include establishing structured mentorship programs for newly hired teachers (Ebbrecht & Martin, 2017), creating channels for teacher involvement in curriculum reform and school decision-making to strengthen belonging and engagement (Tschannen-Moran, 2001), and attending to workload distribution and teacher well-being through fair task allocation and workload monitoring (recent workload research). These approaches are consistent with broader reviews of servant leadership practice in organizations (Parris & Peachey, 2013) and with empirical findings from China showing servant leadership's positive association with teacher well-being (Zhang et al., 2023).

However, many of these findings are drawn from corporate organizations or Western educational contexts. Research on servant leadership in Chinese secondary schools remains limited. Domestic scholars (Wang, 2018; Zhang et al., 2021) suggested that in China—where collectivist culture and hierarchical school structures dominate—the effectiveness of servant leadership may be constrained by traditional authority norms. Even when leaders consciously adopt service-oriented management approaches, their effects can be limited by institutional rules and cultural climates.

Therefore, exploring how servant leadership impacts teacher satisfaction in secondary schools is critical. It not only enriches the cross-cultural applicability of existing theories but also provides empirical evidence for improving school leadership practices, thereby offering practical strategies to enhance teacher satisfaction and contribute to sustainable school development.

2.3 Educational Team Cohesion

2.3.1 The Concept and Dimensions of Team Cohesion

Team cohesion refers to the strength of relationships and the degree of unity among team members working toward common goals, serving as a key indicator of team effectiveness. Carron (1982) and Zaccaro & Lowe (1988) proposed that team cohesion comprises two core dimensions: task cohesion and social cohesion.

Task cohesion refers to the unity and collaboration exhibited by team members in achieving shared goals and completing tasks. In schools, particularly secondary schools, task cohesion manifests in teachers' shared commitment to educational objectives, interdisciplinary cooperation, curriculum development and optimization, and the willingness and capability to participate in school-wide projects. This cohesion not only reflects teachers' commitment to the educational mission but also directly impacts teaching quality and overall student learning outcomes. Teams with strong task cohesion are more likely to develop collaborative teaching models, sharing resources and experiences, and improving educational practices collectively.

Social cohesion focuses on interpersonal relationships and emotional connections within the team, encompassing trust, emotional support, a sense of belonging, and open communication. Teachers in socially cohesive teams are more likely to establish supportive cultures, which can alleviate workplace stress, enhance job satisfaction, and reduce conflicts. In secondary schools, social cohesion is also reflected in peer support, collaborative participation in school events, and shared commitment to school development, all of which strengthen team stability and cooperation (Carron, 1982).

Task cohesion and social cohesion complement each other, together forming the overall cohesion of teacher teams. High levels of cohesion not only improve team efficiency but also strengthen an organization's capacity to adapt to change and innovate, which is essential for the long-term development of schools.

2.3.2 The Role of Team Cohesion in Schools

Team cohesion plays a critical role in the educational environment, especially in secondary schools. First, cohesion promotes collaboration and communication among teachers. Sharing experiences in lesson planning, curriculum design, teaching methods, and student management not only optimizes teaching processes but also enhances classroom effectiveness and student learning outcomes (Liu, 2021). Highly cohesive teacher teams are more adept at integrating new ideas and technologies, thereby fostering continuous educational development.

Second, cohesion positively impacts teaching quality and research capacity. Teams with high cohesion are more willing to engage in educational research and innovation projects, fostering collaborative exploration. Such collaboration not only improves teaching practices but also encourages interdisciplinary research, enriching the academic contributions of schools. For secondary schools, joint research and collaborative teaching significantly enhance the school's competitiveness in education innovation and curriculum reform.

Furthermore, team cohesion strengthens school culture and stability. Highly cohesive teams generally demonstrate higher organizational commitment and a stronger sense of belonging, enabling them to better respond to external changes and challenges. This stability is particularly important for schools facing policy adjustments, curriculum reforms, or teacher turnover, as it helps maintain teaching continuity and organizational development (Tschannen-Moran, 2001).

In summary, team cohesion not only enhances teacher collaboration and teaching quality but also provides a foundation for building efficient, stable, and innovative schools.

2.3.3 The Relationship between Teacher Satisfaction and Team Cohesion

Teacher satisfaction and team cohesion share a close and dynamic relationship, which holds significant importance in both educational management theory and empirical research (Tschannen-Moran, 2001; Zhang, 2022). In secondary school contexts, this relationship is particularly salient, as teacher collaboration directly impacts overall educational quality and institutional development.

Firstly, teacher satisfaction is a crucial driver of team cohesion. Teachers with higher satisfaction levels tend to hold positive perceptions of their work environment, task arrangements, and school culture, making them more willing to engage in team activities, share teaching resources, and participate in collaborative projects. This proactive involvement not only enhances task cohesion but also strengthens social cohesion, as satisfied teachers are more inclined to build trust and mutual support within the team. Research shows that leadership support, job autonomy, and fair treatment are key factors in improving teacher satisfaction (Dinham & Scott, 2000), and increased satisfaction can significantly boost overall team collaboration efficiency.

Secondly, team cohesion positively influences teacher satisfaction. Highly cohesive teams offer stable emotional support and a sense of belonging, which help alleviate occupational stress and enhance teachers' well-being. Teams with strong social cohesion typically have open communication channels, shared educational philosophies, and cultures of mutual respect, all of which reinforce teachers' professional identity and satisfaction (Carron, 1982). In secondary schools, cohesion is

also reflected in interdisciplinary collaboration, peer mentoring, and shared commitment to school development, contributing not only to professional growth but also to the overall effectiveness of the institution.

Thirdly, the relationship between teacher satisfaction and team cohesion is mutually reinforcing. Teacher satisfaction enhances team cohesion, and in turn, high team cohesion further improves satisfaction, creating a virtuous cycle. This dynamic interaction is critical for sustainable school development. In times of curriculum reform, technological updates, or external challenges, teams with high satisfaction and cohesion are more likely to reach consensus and collaborate effectively, thereby driving overall school improvement.

Thus, understanding the interplay between teacher satisfaction and team cohesion is vital for educational leaders. Enhancing teacher satisfaction not only strengthens cohesion but also lays a solid foundation for continuous educational innovation and organizational growth.

2.4 Summary

A review in the preceding sections reveals that servant leadership, which emphasizes care, listening, and support, represents a people-centered approach to leadership that holds significant value in school management. This leadership style not only improves teachers' work experiences but also fosters an inclusive and collaborative school culture. In the context of secondary education, servant leadership can enhance teachers' professional identity and job satisfaction by building trust, providing emotional support, and offering greater opportunities for teacher participation. Teacher satisfaction, as an important indicator of professional well-being, is influenced by multiple factors, including leadership support, autonomy in work, access to resources, and a positive work environment and interpersonal relationships. Satisfied teachers are more willing to engage in team collaboration, share teaching experiences, and commit themselves fully to achieving common goals, thereby strengthening both task cohesion and social cohesion. Team cohesion is regarded as a critical factor in improving collaborative efficiency, promoting professional development, and enhancing the stability of educational organizations.

Overall, these findings provide a solid theoretical foundation for further exploring how servant leadership influences teacher satisfaction and team cohesion in secondary school settings, while also offering valuable insights for improving school leadership practices.

2.5 Introduction to Shanghai Jianping High School

Shanghai Jianping High School, located at No. 517 Gushan Road in Pudong New

District, Shanghai, was founded in 1944. Originally established as a branch of Yangjing Middle School, it was officially renamed Jianping High School in 1954. As one of Shanghai's key secondary schools, Jianping High School is renowned for its long history and high educational quality. In 2005, it was designated as one of the first experimental and model high schools in Shanghai. The school covers an area of nearly 40,000 square meters, featuring a beautiful campus environment and comprehensive teaching facilities, with a prime location that offers convenient transportation.

The school adheres to the educational philosophy of "Self-reliance, Coexistence, Scientific Attitude, Humanistic Care, and Leadership Qualities," aiming to integrate individual development with societal needs. With the guiding principles of "competence + specialty" and "norms + choice," Jianping High School focuses on improving educational quality comprehensively. The school actively promotes curriculum reform, develops smart classrooms, organizes diverse moral education activities and club programs, implements a credit-based management system, and applies tiered teaching approaches. It also emphasizes cultivating students' self-management abilities and innovative literacy.

Beyond its own development, Jianping High School established China's first education group, which includes multiple branch schools and educational institutions such as Jianping West School, Pinghe Bilingual School, Pufa Middle School, Jianping Online School, Jianping Experimental Middle School, Jianping Experimental Primary School, and Jianping Century Middle School. This education group model not only optimizes the allocation of educational resources but also provides a solid foundation for sustainable school development.

In teacher development, Jianping High School implements the strategy of "leading by famous teachers, supported by research, and strengthened by team collaboration," continually enhancing teachers' professional competence and instructional quality. With its advanced educational philosophy, abundant teaching resources, and high-quality outcomes, Jianping High School has established itself as a model school in Shanghai's education system. It serves as an important base for cultivating outstanding talents with both national spirit and an international perspective, offering valuable references for educational leadership and school management practices.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

Based on relevant research, this study proposes a model focusing on the relationships among servant leadership, teacher satisfaction, and team cohesion. Evidence shows that servant leadership positively influences teacher satisfaction, which in turn affects team cohesion. Servant Leadership Theory provides the

foundation for this model, emphasizing empathy, listening, empowerment, and support. Teacher satisfaction reflects teachers' evaluations of their work and their emotional state, while team cohesion refers to the closeness of relationships and shared commitment within a team. This framework offers a clear basis for examining how servant leadership behavior influences satisfaction and cohesion in schools.
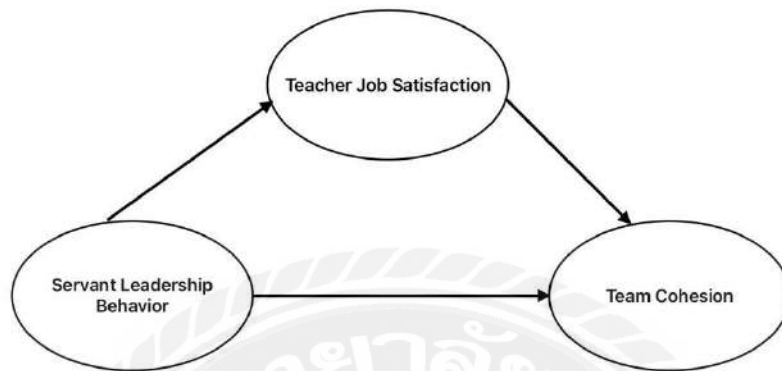

Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative research approach, aiming to empirically examine the relationships among servant leadership, teacher satisfaction, and team cohesion. The strength of quantitative research lies in its ability to utilize structured data collection and analysis to uncover patterns and correlations between variables, thereby providing a reliable basis for testing theoretical models.

Data for this study were primarily collected through an online questionnaire survey. The questionnaire consisted of three core sections: Servant Leadership Scale (Liden et al., 2008), Teacher Satisfaction Scale (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010), and Team Cohesion Scale (Carron, 1982). All items were designed using a five-point Likert scale, allowing respondents to indicate their level of agreement ranging from "s trongly disagree" to "strongly agree." This design not only facilitated ease of response for teachers but also supported subsequent statistical analysis.

To ensure the scientific rigor and reliability of the study, a small-scale pilot test was conducted prior to the official distribution of the questionnaire to assess its validity and reliability. The finalized questionnaire was distributed through the school's internal online platforms and via email to teachers, ensuring both accessibility and broad participation. All responses were collected anonymously to encourage participants to provide genuine and unbiased feedback.

3.2 Population and Sample

The target population of this study consisted of full-time, officially appointed teachers at Jianping High School, a well-known public secondary school in Shanghai, China. Renowned for its academic excellence and innovative management practices, Jianping High School provides an ideal context for examining the impact of servant leadership on teacher satisfaction and team cohesion. Data collection was conducted between March and May 2025 to ensure that the responses reflected the most current teaching and organizational conditions at the school.

From this population, a total of 200 questionnaires were distributed via the school's internal communication system. Of these, 185 valid responses were received, yielding a response rate of 92.5%. This sample size was considered adequate for quantitative analysis, providing a reliable foundation for conducting correlation and regression tests while minimizing sampling error.

The study adopted a stratified random sampling method to ensure representation across various subgroups of the teaching staff. Teachers were categorized according to tenure, subject specialization, and professional rank, and samples were randomly selected from each stratum. This approach ensured that the sample reflected the diversity of perspectives and experiences among teachers at Jianping High School, reducing the risk that results would be disproportionately influenced by any single group, and thereby enhancing the representativeness and validity of the findings.

3.3 Hypothesis

This study aimed to examine the relationships among servant leadership behavior, teacher job satisfaction, and team cohesion in educational organizations, investigating whether servant leadership behavior positively influences teacher job satisfaction and whether higher teacher job satisfaction contributes to stronger team cohesion. It also explores the potential mediating role of teacher job satisfaction in the relationship between servant leadership behavior and team cohesion, providing a foundation for understanding how leadership practices affect both individual and collective outcomes in schools.

H1: Servant leadership behavior has a significant positive impact on teacher job satisfaction.

H2: Teacher job satisfaction has a significant positive impact on team cohesion in educational organizations.

H3: Teacher job satisfaction plays a mediating role in the relationship between servant leadership behavior and team cohesion.
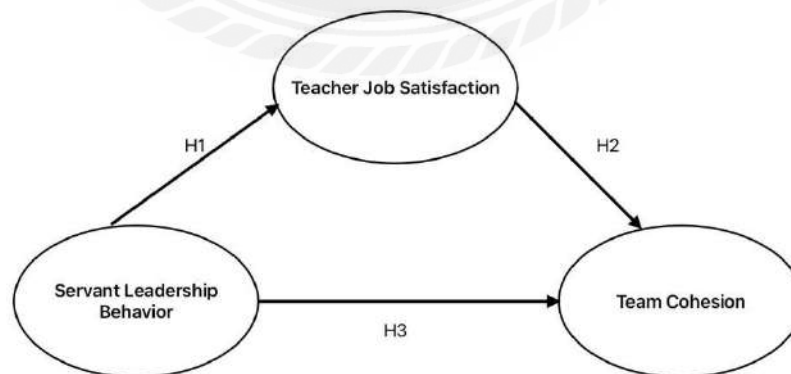

Figure 3.1 Hypothesis

3.4 Research Instrument

This study primarily employed a structured questionnaire as the data collection tool to ensure effective measurement of the research variables. The questionnaire was designed based on relevant theories and existing empirical studies, covering three core variables: servant leadership behavior, teacher job satisfaction, and team cohesion. All items used a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree), facilitating quantitative analysis and subsequent statistical testing.

The questionnaire was divided into three sections: servant leadership behavior section measured leaders' service-oriented tendencies and actual actions within the school; teacher job satisfaction section assessed teachers' subjective perceptions of work content, conditions, and professional development; team cohesion section examined the degree of cooperation and interpersonal trust among teachers.

Table 3.1 Measurement Items

Variable	Dimension	Sample Item
Servant Leadership Behavior	Emotional Healing	My leader shows concern for my personal well-being.
	Creating Value for the Community	My leader promotes activities beneficial to the school community.
	Conceptual Skills	My leader has a clear vision for the school's future.
	Empowering	My leader encourages me to take initiative in my work.
	Helping Subordinates Grow and Succeed	My leader provides opportunities for my professional development.
	Putting Subordinates First	My leader prioritizes the needs of teachers.
	Behaving Ethically	My leader acts fairly and justly.
Teacher Job Satisfaction	Work Content Satisfaction	I feel fulfilled by the work I do.
	Work Conditions Satisfaction	I am satisfied with the teaching environment.
	Interpersonal Relationships Satisfaction	I enjoy good relationships with my colleagues.
	Professional Growth Satisfaction	I have sufficient opportunities for professional growth.
	Job Security Satisfaction	I feel confident about my job stability.
Team Cohesion	Task Cohesion	Our teaching team works well toward common goals.
	Social Cohesion	Members of our teaching team trust each other.

3.5 Reliability and Validity Analysis of the Scale

3.5.1 Questionnaire Reliability Analysis

In this study, the Cronbach's Alpha values for the three core variables—Servant Leadership Behavior (SLB), Teacher Job Satisfaction (TJS), and Team Cohesion (TC)—all exceeded 0.85, indicating a high degree of internal consistency. Specifically, the SLB scale yielded an α value of 0.912, demonstrating excellent reliability in capturing leadership behaviors such as empathy, listening, and empowerment. The TJS scale obtained an α value of 0.887, indicating strong consistency in measuring multiple dimensions of teacher satisfaction, including satisfaction with work content, professional growth, colleague relationships, and organizational support. The TC scale achieved an α value of 0.875, reflecting stable measurement capability in assessing both task cohesion and social cohesion within teaching teams.

The overall Cronbach's Alpha for the questionnaire was 0.901, indicating that the instrument as a whole possesses a high level of reliability. This high level of consistency ensures the stability and trustworthiness of the collected data, reducing the likelihood of measurement errors. The robust reliability results strengthen confidence in the data analysis, as they suggest that observed differences among respondents are more likely to reflect true individual variations rather than inconsistencies in the measurement tool. Therefore, the high Cronbach's Alpha values in this study provide strong empirical support for the reliability of the questionnaire as a research instrument.

Table 3.2 Reliability Analysis of the Questionnaire

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Servant Leadership Behavior (SLB)	15	0.912
Teacher Job Satisfaction (TJS)	12	0.887
Team Cohesion (TC)	10	0.875
Overall Questionnaire	37	0.901

3.5.1 Questionnaire Validity Analysis

Construct validity was examined through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). The results showed that all items had factor loadings greater than 0.50, confirming that these items effectively represent their corresponding latent constructs. The SLB scale exhibited high loadings on factors related to empathy, listening, and empowerment; the TJS scale showed consistent loadings across dimensions such as satisfaction with work content, professional development, colleague relationships, and organizational support; and the TC scale demonstrated strong loadings on factors representing task cohesion and social cohesion.

In addition, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was 0.872, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($p < 0.001$), confirming the suitability of the data for factor analysis. These results collectively indicate that the questionnaire possesses high construct validity and can accurately reflect the theoretical framework of this study.

Overall, the assessments of content validity and construct validity indicate that the questionnaire is a precise and reliable instrument capable of effectively measuring SLB, TJS, and TC. This solid foundation of validity enhances the credibility of the subsequent data analysis and provides strong support for the reliability of the study's conclusions.

Table 3.3 Validity Analysis of the Questionnaire

Variable	KMO	Bartlett's Test (χ^2, p)	Cumulative Variance Explained (%)
Servant Leadership Behavior (SLB)	0.924	1024.56, p < 0.001	64.82
Teacher Job Satisfaction (TJS)	0.901	879.42, p < 0.001	61.47
Team Cohesion (TC)	0.889	755.23, p < 0.001	62.10
Overall Questionnaire	0.872	2659.21, p < 0.001	

Note: All KMO values > 0.8 and Bartlett's Test p < 0.001 indicate that the data are suitable for factor analysis.

3.6 Data Collection

The data collection for this study took place between March and May 2025, ensuring that the responses reflected the most current teaching and organizational conditions at Jianping High School in Shanghai. A structured questionnaire was used as the primary instrument to collect quantitative data on Servant Leadership Behavior (SLB), Teacher Job Satisfaction (TJS), and Team Cohesion (TC).

The questionnaire was distributed online through Jianping High School's internal communication platform and email system. This method ensured convenient access for teachers and maintained anonymity, encouraging authentic responses. Participation was voluntary, and clear instructions were provided to ensure consistent understanding of the questionnaire items.

A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed to full-time, officially appointed teachers, covering various teaching tenures, subject specializations, and professional ranks. Of these, 185 valid questionnaires were returned, resulting in a response rate of 92.5%. Invalid or incomplete responses were excluded to maintain data quality and reli.

3.7 Data Analysis

3.7.1 Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistical analysis was employed to summarize and present the basic characteristics of the collected questionnaire data, enabling researchers to gain an intuitive understanding of the overall profile of the sample. In this study, mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage were calculated for all collected data. This analysis helped reveal the general distribution of responses regarding the three core variables — Servant Leadership Behavior, Teacher Job Satisfaction, and Team Cohesion—and provided foundational data for subsequent correlation and regression analyses.

3.7.2 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was used to examine the relationships between variables and their statistical significance, helping researchers determine the predictive influence of independent variables on dependent variables. In this study, regression analysis was conducted to test the relationships between servant leadership behavior and teacher job satisfaction, as well as between teacher job satisfaction and team cohesion. By examining the significance of regression coefficients, the study determined whether these relationships support the proposed hypotheses. Additionally, regression analysis provided quantitative evidence regarding the strength of these relationships, thereby reinforcing the empirical basis of the theoretical model.

3.7.3 Mediation Effect Testing

Mediation effect testing aims to explore the mechanism through which teacher job satisfaction influences the relationship between servant leadership behavior and team cohesion. This study adopted the classical mediation testing approach proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986) and employed the PROCESS macro tool (Hayes, 2013) for verification. This method involved testing the significance of three pathways: the direct effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable, the effect of the independent variable on the mediator, and the effect of the mediator on the dependent variable. By analyzing path coefficients and significance levels, it determined whether teacher job satisfaction played a mediating role between servant leadership behavior and team cohesion. This analysis deepened the understanding of how leadership behavior indirectly influence team cohesion through teacher satisfaction, offering theoretical insights and practical implications for educational leadership.

Chapter 4 Findings and Discussion

4.1 Findings

4.1.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	70	38.0
	Female	115	62.0
Age	Under 30	25	13.5
	31–40	83	45.0
	41–50	65	35.0
	Over 50	12	6.5
Teaching Experience	≤5 years	37	20.0
	6–10 years	55	30.0
	>10 years	93	50.0
Academic Rank	Junior	18	10.0
	Intermediate	65	35.0
	Senior	28	15.0
	Associate Senior	74	40.0
Subject Area	Chinese	28	15.0
	Mathematics	24	13.0
	English	20	11.0
	Physics	15	8.0
	Chemistry	14	7.5
	Biology	13	7.0
	History	12	6.5
	Geography	11	6.0
	Politics	12	6.5
	Others	36	9.5

Table 4.1 shows that among the 185 teachers who participated in this study, females accounted for the majority at 62%, while males made up 38%. This proportion reflects a common gender distribution trend in secondary education (OECD, 2020).

In terms of age distribution, the largest group of teachers was aged between 31 and 40 years, accounting for 45% of the sample. This indicates that mid-career teachers form the majority of the teaching staff. Teachers aged 41 – 50 accounted for 35%,

suggesting a stable and experienced teaching workforce. Teachers under 30 represented 13.5%, and those over 50 comprised 6.5%, indicating that the school has both youthful vitality and experienced educators.Regarding teaching experience, half of the respondents had more than ten years of teaching experience, demonstrating a highly experienced and stable workforce. Teachers with six to ten years of experience accounted for 30%, while those with five years or less made up 20%, showing that the school maintains a balance between veteran and newer teaching staff, thereby supporting sustainable development. In terms of academic rank, intermediate and associate senior teachers represented the majority, accounting for 35% and 40% respectively, making up 75% of the sample. This structure reflects a strong professional capability within the school. Junior teachers accounted for 10% and senior teachers 15%, indicating that the rank distribution is dominated by middle and senior-level professionals.The subject area distribution shows a balanced range of disciplines. Chinese teachers formed the largest group at 15%, followed by mathematics (13%) and English (11%). Other subjects such as physics, chemistry, biology, history, geography, and politics each represented between 6% and 8%, demonstrating a well-rounded subject distribution that supports diverse student learning needs.

Overall, the sample's demographic characteristics in terms of gender, age, teaching experience, academic rank, and subject background present good diversity and representation. This provides a solid foundation for analyzing the relationships between servant leadership, teacher job satisfaction, and team cohesion. Such diversity enhances the applicability of the study findings and increases the reliability of the research conclusions.

4.1.2 Core Variable Data Description and Analysis

Table 4.2 Descriptive Statistics of Core Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Frequency (%) of "Agree" or "Strongly Agree"
Servant Leadership Behavior (SLB)	4.12	0.48	78%
Teacher Job Satisfaction (TJS)	3.98	0.52	70%
Team Cohesion (TC)	3.87	0.55	68%

In summary, the mean scores of the core variables in this study are relatively high, indicating that respondents generally hold positive evaluations of servant leadership behavior, job satisfaction, and team cohesion. This suggests that at Jianping High School in Shanghai, teachers generally recognize and appreciate leadership support and the team environment.

Specifically, Servant Leadership Behavior (SLB) has the highest mean score of 4.12, with a standard deviation of 0.48. Approximately 78% of teachers selected "Agree" or "Strongly Agree," showing a consistent and positive perception of leaders' empathy, listening, and empowerment practices.

Teacher Job Satisfaction (TJS) has a mean score of 3.98 and a standard deviation of 0.52, with 70% of teachers reporting high satisfaction. This reflects generally positive attitudes toward work content, professional development opportunities, and the work environment, indicating that the school has achieved certain success in promoting teacher professional growth.

Team Cohesion (TC) has a mean score of 3.87, with a standard deviation of 0.55. About 68% of teachers agreed that their teams exhibit high levels of collaboration and support. Although slightly lower than the previous two variables, this still represents a relatively strong level of team cohesion, indicating a generally healthy collaborative atmosphere among teachers.

These results provide a solid basis for subsequent correlation and regression analyses and offer a reliable foundation for testing the research hypotheses. They contribute to a deeper exploration of the mechanisms through which servant leadership behavior impacts teacher satisfaction and team cohesion.

4.1.3 Correlation Analysis of Core Variables

Table 4.3 Pearson Correlation Coefficients of Core Variables

Variable	Servant Leadership Behavior(SLB)	Teacher Job Satisfaction(TJS)	Team Cohesion(TC)
Servant Leadership Behavior(SLB)	1		
Teacher Job Satisfaction(TJS)	0.652**	1	
Team Cohesion(TC)	0.531**	0.598**	1

Note: $p < 0.01$

Table 4.3 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients among these variables. It can be seen that SLB is significantly positively correlated with TJS ($r = 0.652$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that higher levels of servant leadership behavior are associated with greater teacher job satisfaction. Similarly, TJS is significantly positively correlated with TC ($r = 0.598$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that teachers with higher job satisfaction are more likely to contribute to stronger team cohesion. Furthermore, SLB also shows a significant positive correlation with TC ($r = 0.531$, $p < 0.01$), implying that leadership behavior may have a direct influence on team cohesion.

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These findings indicate that the core variables are interrelated, consistent with theoretical expectations. The observed correlations provide a foundation for further regression analysis to explore the strength and direction of these relationships and to test the research hypotheses.

4.1.4 Core Variables Regression Analysis

Table 4.4 Regression Analysis Results of Core Variables

Model	Independent Variable(s)	Dependent Variable	Standardized Coefficient (β)	Standard Error (SE)	t-value	p-value	R^2
Model 1	Servant Leadership Behavior (SLB)	Teacher Job Satisfaction (TJS)	0.652	0.064	10.128	<0.001	0.425
Model 2	Teacher Job Satisfaction (TJS)	Team Cohesion (TC)	0.598	0.063	9.534	<0.001	0.358
Model 3	Servant Leadership Behavior (SLB), Teacher Job Satisfaction (TJS)	Team Cohesion (TC)	SLB: 0.312	0.081	3.821	<0.001	0.486
			TJS: 0.462	0.084	5.487	<0.001	

Note: R^2 = coefficient of determination.

Based on the above data analysis, the regression results indicate significant relationships among the core variables of this study, providing strong empirical support for the research hypotheses. Overall, servant leadership behavior has a significant positive impact on teacher job satisfaction, and teacher job satisfaction, in turn, has a significant positive effect on team cohesion. These results confirm H1 and H2, offering solid evidence for the theoretical model proposed in this study.

In Model One, servant leadership behavior was set as the independent variable, and teacher job satisfaction was set as the dependent variable. The regression results show that servant leadership behavior has a highly significant predictive effect on teacher job satisfaction (beta = 0.652, t = 10.128, p < 0.001), with an R squared of 0.425. This means that servant leadership behavior can explain 42.5 percent of the variance in teacher job satisfaction. This finding strongly supports H1, emphasizing that a leadership style centered on empathy, listening, and empowerment can significantly enhance teacher job satisfaction. Such leadership behavior meets teachers' psychological needs, improves the work environment, and strengthens a sense of professional accomplishment, all of which are important factors in motivating teachers and enhancing their engagement in teaching.

In Model Two, teacher job satisfaction was set as the independent variable, and team cohesion was set as the dependent variable. The results show that teacher job satisfaction has a significant positive effect on team cohesion (beta = 0.598, t = 9.534, p < 0.001), with an R squared of 0.358. This indicates that teacher job satisfaction can explain 35.8 percent of the variance in team cohesion, supporting H2. The results further suggest that satisfied teachers are more willing to cooperate, actively participate in team goals, and maintain harmonious interpersonal relationships. Such a positive work environment not only enhances task cohesion but also strengthens social cohesion, thereby promoting the overall effectiveness of school teams.

In Model Three, servant leadership behavior and teacher job satisfaction were both set as independent variables, and team cohesion was set as the dependent variable. The results show that servant leadership behavior (beta = 0.312, t = 3.821, p < 0.01) and teacher job satisfaction (beta = 0.462, t = 5.487, p < 0.001) both have significant effects on team cohesion, with the model's R squared reaching 0.486. This indicates that servant leadership behavior and teacher job satisfaction together can explain 48.6 percent of the variance in team cohesion. The comprehensive model emphasizes that leadership behavior not only has a direct impact on team cohesion but also indirectly influences it through improving teacher job satisfaction. This finding is consistent with the conceptual framework of this study and provides support for H3, highlighting the importance of combining supportive leadership with satisfaction-oriented strategies to foster high cohesion and high-performance teaching teams.

4.1.5 Mediation Effect Analysis

Based on the regression results presented in Table 4.4, this study further examined the mediating role of teacher job satisfaction in the relationship between servant leadership behavior and team cohesion. First, servant leadership behavior was found to have a significant positive effect on teacher job satisfaction (β = 0.652, p < 0.001), while teacher job satisfaction also showed a significant positive effect on team cohesion (β = 0.598, p < 0.001). When both servant leadership behavior and teacher job satisfaction were included in the model, the regression coefficient of servant leadership behavior on team cohesion decreased from β = 0.462 to β = 0.312, while teacher job satisfaction remained significant (β = 0.462, p < 0.001). This change indicates that teacher job satisfaction plays a partial mediating role in the relationship between servant leadership behavior and team cohesion.

To further verify the significance of the mediation effect, the Bootstrap method was applied with 5,000 resamples. The results showed that the indirect effect of servant leadership behavior on team cohesion through teacher job satisfaction was 0.310, with a 95% confidence interval of [0.245, 0.378], which did not include zero. This suggests that the indirect effect was statistically significant. Further analysis

revealed that approximately 67% of the total effect could be explained through the mediating role of teacher job satisfaction.

Overall, the results demonstrate that teacher job satisfaction plays an important mediating role in the relationship between servant leadership behavior and team cohesion. Servant leadership behavior not only directly enhances team cohesion but also indirectly promotes its formation by increasing teacher job satisfaction. This finding provides strong support for H3 and emphasizes that in educational management, combining supportive leadership with satisfaction-oriented strategies can effectively foster highly cohesive and high-performing teacher teams.

Table 4.5 Bootstrap Test Results of Mediation Effect

Pathway	Effect	Bootstrap Standard Error	Bootstrap Lower Limit Confidence Interval	Bootstrap Upper Limit Confidence Interval	Result
Direct Effect (Servant Leadership Behavior on Team Cohesion)	0.312	0.041	0.231	0.395	Significant (Confidence Interval does not include zero)
Indirect Effect (Servant Leadership Behavior on Team Cohesion through teacher job satisfaction)	0.310	0.033	0.245	0.378	Significant (Confidence Interval does not include zero)
Total Effect (Servant Leadership Behavior on Team Cohesion)	0.622	0.038	0.548	0.699	Significant

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 The Significant Impact of Servant Leadership Behavior on Teacher Job Satisfaction

From the perspective of servant leadership theory, servant leadership behavior, characterized by empathy, listening, and empowerment, has a profound impact on teacher job satisfaction. For teachers at Jianping High School in Shanghai, such leadership is manifested in clear support from school management, opportunities for participating in decision-making, and encouragement of innovative teaching methods. This leadership style creates an environment in which teachers feel heard and valued, thereby stimulating intrinsic motivation.

Positive leadership support provides teachers with a sense of security and belonging, enabling them to focus on teaching tasks and pursue professional growth. When teachers feel understood and cared for by leadership, they are more willing to engage in teaching improvement and collaborative work, which helps improve job satisfaction. For example, at Jianping High School, the leadership has introduced personalized professional development programs and recognition for outstanding teaching performance—measures proven to boost teacher morale. The data analysis in this study shows that higher scores of servant leadership behavior are associated with higher teacher job satisfaction scores, which not only validates the theoretical hypotheses but also aligns with previous research findings.

4.2.2 The Significant Impact of Teacher Job Satisfaction on Team Cohesion

Teacher job satisfaction plays a key role in promoting team cohesion. For teachers at Jianping High School, satisfaction mainly comes from the working environment, opportunities for professional development, and team support. These factors not only influence individual emotions but also manifest in collective behaviors, enhancing the sense of unity within the school.

Teachers with higher job satisfaction are more inclined to establish positive cooperative relationships and actively participate in team activities. Internal support mechanisms in the school, such as regular teaching seminars, interdisciplinary exchanges, and shared resource platforms, provide teachers with opportunities for communication and collaboration. This positive working atmosphere fosters trust, mutual respect, and a sense of belonging among teachers, thereby promoting the formation of team cohesion. Data analysis shows a significant positive correlation between teacher job satisfaction and team cohesion, which aligns with theoretical perspectives that emphasize team effectiveness as being grounded in psychological and relational factors.

4.2.3 The Direct and Indirect Effects of Servant Leadership Behavior on Team Cohesion

Servant leadership behavior not only directly influences team cohesion but also indirectly promotes it by enhancing teacher job satisfaction. Practices at Jianping High School demonstrate that leadership can improve teacher satisfaction and team cohesion through optimizing resource allocation, providing teaching support, and establishing effective communication platforms.

The data analysis indicates that teacher job satisfaction plays a partial mediating role in the relationship between servant leadership behavior and team cohesion. This suggests that supportive leadership not only directly affects cooperative relationships

among teachers but also indirectly fosters team integration and collaboration by enhancing teachers' psychological satisfaction and work motivation. For example, when Jianping High School leadership encourages teachers to share successful experiences and provides platforms for peer guidance, it not only improves teacher satisfaction but also strengthens team cohesion. This finding is consistent with existing research and further reinforces the importance of leadership behavior in shaping organizational culture and performance.

Table 4.6 Hypothesis Test Results

NO.	Hypothesis	Result
H1	Servant leadership behavior has a significant positive impact on teacher job satisfaction.	Supported
H2	Teacher job satisfaction has a significant positive impact on team cohesion in educational organizations.	Supported
H3	Teacher job satisfaction plays a mediating role in the relationship between servant leadership behavior and team cohesion.	Supported

Chapter 5 Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

This study, taking Jianping High School in Shanghai as the research context, explored the relationship among servant leadership behavior, teacher job satisfaction, and team cohesion, and further examined the mediating role of teacher job satisfaction. The following conclusions are drawn:

Servant leadership behavior plays a key role in influencing teacher job satisfaction. As a leadership style centered on empathy, listening, and empowerment, servant leadership meets teachers' psychological needs and fosters a supportive work environment. When leaders provide guidance, encouragement, and autonomy, teachers are more likely to experience higher job satisfaction. This satisfaction not only enhances teachers' personal well-being but also strengthens their professional commitment. Data analysis shows that servant leadership behavior has a significant positive effect on teacher job satisfaction, further confirming that leadership style is a crucial factor in promoting work motivation and engagement. This finding underscores the need for school leaders to adopt a people-centered leadership approach, especially in modern educational settings where teacher well-being directly affects educational outcomes.

Teacher job satisfaction is an important factor in enhancing team cohesion. Satisfied teachers are more willing to collaborate, share knowledge, and contribute to collective goals. Positive job satisfaction helps build harmonious interpersonal relationships and a supportive organizational culture, which are vital for strengthening team cohesion. This study shows a significant positive relationship between teacher job satisfaction and team cohesion, highlighting the importance of meeting teachers' needs to foster cohesive educational teams. Moreover, teacher satisfaction serves as a stabilizing force, reducing turnover intentions and fostering long-term professional dedication, which is crucial for sustaining school improvement efforts.

Teacher job satisfaction plays a significant mediating role in the relationship between servant leadership behavior and team cohesion. The findings indicate that servant leadership not only has a direct impact on team cohesion but also indirectly influences it by enhancing teacher job satisfaction. This finding emphasizes the importance of integrating supportive leadership with strategies that improve teacher satisfaction. Such a combined approach can effectively foster highly cohesive and high-performing school teams. It further suggests that leadership development programs should incorporate strategies that strengthen teachers' work satisfaction to maximize the impact of leadership on organizational outcomes.

Overall, servant leadership behavior, teacher job satisfaction, and team cohesion form an interconnected system. Schools should value leadership style and satisfaction-oriented strategies, cultivating a leadership culture based on empathy and empowerment while meeting teachers' needs for support and professional development. These efforts not only improve teachers' well-being but also strengthen team cohesion, laying a solid foundation for sustained improvement in teaching quality and overall school performance. The findings of this study provide empirical support for educational leaders to prioritize servant leadership as a pathway to building strong, collaborative, and high-performing educational communities.

5.2 Recommendation

5.2.1 Servant Leadership Should Be Deeply Integrated into School Management

Schools should gradually shift from traditional control-oriented management models to leadership approaches centered on service, empowerment, and collaboration. This transformation requires systematic adjustments in both organizational structure and culture, positioning servant leadership as a core principle rather than an ancillary practice. Firstly, schools can adopt structured diagnostic tools such as satisfaction audits, school climate surveys, and teacher feedback mechanisms to continuously monitor teachers' needs and the organizational climate. This not only enables leadership to promptly identify issues but also provides data support to guide decision-making and refine management strategies.

Furthermore, school leaders should redefine their roles, focusing more on listening to teachers' concerns, addressing practical problems, and providing developmental support. Regular one-on-one meetings, team discussions, and anonymous feedback collection can effectively foster transparent communication and mutual trust. Leadership training, emotional intelligence development, and conflict management skill enhancement should be embedded in professional development plans to ensure leaders are equipped with the competencies needed to practice servant leadership effectively. This transformation not only improves management approaches but also significantly boosts teacher job satisfaction and organizational belonging, laying a strong foundation for the formation of long-term, high-performing teams.

5.2.2 Support Strategies Should Be Tailored to Different Career Stages of Teachers

Teachers' career development involves distinct stages, each with unique needs and challenges. Schools should design support strategies based on these stages to improve teacher satisfaction and professional growth. For novice teachers, structured onboarding programs and emotional support should be provided, such as pairing them with experienced mentors, offering classroom management training, and conducting

periodic performance feedback. Such initiatives help new teachers adapt quickly to their work environment, build teaching confidence, and reduce early-career burnout, thereby enhancing their professional identity.

For mid-career teachers, schools should provide opportunities for professional development and leadership roles to help them overcome career bottlenecks and strengthen their sense of belonging. This can include offering specialized training, leading teaching projects, and participating in curriculum development, fostering skill enhancement and sustained motivation. For senior teachers, schools should provide opportunities for involvement in strategic decision-making, mentoring new teachers, and contributing to professional development. Such stage-based support strategies not only align with the natural progression of teaching careers but also contribute to the cultivation of a sustainable and motivated teacher workforce that supports the long-term objectives of the school.

5.2.3 Institutionalized Communication Structures Should Be Established

Effective communication is crucial for improving teacher satisfaction and team cohesion. Schools should establish institutionalized communication platforms to ensure teachers have opportunities to express opinions, engage in discussions, and influence decision-making at various levels. Such platforms may include regular principal-teacher forums, cross-grade dialogues, departmental meetings, and online anonymous feedback systems. Institutionalized communication channels enhance transparency, facilitate information sharing, and ensure all teachers' voices are heard and addressed, thereby strengthening teachers' sense of belonging and engagement.

Communication structures require not only technical platforms but also an open and trust-based culture. School leaders should actively listen to teacher feedback, address concerns promptly, and communicate the outcomes of these processes to reinforce trust. Cultivating psychological safety among teachers, where they feel secure expressing genuine opinions without fear of repercussions, is at the core of institutionalized communication. This not only aligns with the principles of servant leadership but also directly supports the goal of enhancing teacher satisfaction and team cohesion.

5.2.4 Servant Leadership Behaviors Should Be Incorporate into Evaluation and Reward Systems

To ensure the sustainability of servant leadership, schools should integrate service-oriented behaviors into daily evaluation and reward systems. Evaluation criteria should include responsiveness, fairness in workload distribution, and positive impacts on the school climate, supported by anonymous feedback and 360-degree assessments to ensure fairness and transparency. Clear evaluation standards enable

teachers and leaders to recognize the value of servant leadership, encouraging them to prioritize empathy, collaboration, and empowerment in their daily work.

Reward systems should adopt diversified forms, including not only material incentives but also recognition awards, professional development opportunities, research funding, or sabbaticals to honor individuals who demonstrate exemplary servant leadership and team-building contributions. Such rewards can enhance teacher motivation while reinforcing servant leadership as a core value in the school culture. By institutionalizing service-oriented evaluation and reward mechanisms, schools can establish a sustainable leadership framework that effectively enhances teacher satisfaction, strengthens team cohesion, and improves overall school performance.

5.3 Further Study

This study employed a questionnaire survey and statistical analysis to examine the relationships among servant leadership behavior, teacher job satisfaction, and team cohesion. The results confirmed that servant leadership behavior had a significant positive impact on teacher job satisfaction, which in turn enhanced team cohesion. Moreover, teacher job satisfaction was found to partially mediate the relationship between servant leadership behavior and team cohesion. However, this study has several limitations, which provide directions for further research.

First, the scope of influencing factors analyzed in this study is relatively limited. Although servant leadership behavior and teacher job satisfaction are core variables, team cohesion may also be affected by factors such as school culture, opportunities for professional development, workload distribution, and external recognition. Future studies should expand the range of variables considered to build a more comprehensive model of the factors influencing teacher satisfaction and team cohesion.

Second, this study primarily employed questionnaire surveys, which are useful for identifying general trends but less effective at revealing nuanced experiences and genuine perceptions. Future research should consider incorporating qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews or focus group discussions. These approaches can better capture teachers' perceptions of servant leadership, the formation process of job satisfaction, and the evolving dynamics of team cohesion in different contexts.

Third, this study was conducted solely at Jianping High School in Shanghai. Although it provides an in-depth case study of that school, the generalizability of the results may be limited. Therefore, future research should extend similar studies to multiple schools with varying management models, cultural backgrounds, and student

populations, and even expand to cross-regional or international comparisons to test the stability and applicability of the findings.

Based on these limitations, future research should focus on:

(1) Broadening the Research Scope — In addition to servant leadership and teacher job satisfaction, incorporate variables such as organizational culture, professional development mechanisms, teacher workload, and external support systems to construct a more comprehensive model, enabling a deeper understanding of the relationship between team cohesion and teacher satisfaction.

(2) Adopting Mixed Research Methods — Combine quantitative questionnaires with qualitative interviews and case studies to explore the underlying mechanisms among variables more deeply and enhance the richness and applicability of research findings.

(3) Expanding Sample Diversity — Future studies should involve multiple schools in different regions to examine the applicability of the results across varied educational environments, thereby improving the generalizability and reliability of the conclusions.

By pursuing these directions, future research may provide more in-depth, multi-dimensional, and broadly applicable theoretical and practical guidance on how servant leadership and teacher job satisfaction can foster high-cohesion and high-performance educational teams, thereby offering a solid theoretical foundation for sustainable school management reform.

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Appendix

Dear Sir/Madam，

This questionnaire aims to collect data regarding teachers' perceptions of servant leadership behavior, job satisfaction, and team cohesion in schools. The survey is anonymous, and all data will be used for academic research purposes only. Please answer honestly. Thank you for your participation.

Part 1：

1. Gender:
A. Male
B. Female

2. Age:
A. 20–30
B. 31–40
C. 41–50
D. 51 and above

3.Teaching experience:
A. 1–5 years
B. 6–10 years
C. 11–20 years
D. Over 20 years

4. Job title:
A. Junior
B. Intermediate
C. Senior
D. Other

5. Subject taught:
A. Chinese
B. Mathematics
C. English
D. Science
E. Physical Education
F. Arts
G. Other

Part 2 :

Servant Leadership Behavior

Please rate each statement below based on your actual experience:
(1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Statement	Dimension	Rating
School leaders listen to teachers' opinions and adopt them where appropriate	Listening	1 2 3 4 5
School leaders care about teachers' personal development and needs	Empathy	1 2 3 4 5
School leaders empower teachers with decision-making autonomy	Empowerment	1 2 3 4 5
School leaders make fair and unbiased decisions	Fairness	1 2 3 4 5
School leaders inspire teachers to achieve educational goals	Motivation	1 2 3 4 5

Teacher Job Satisfaction

Please rate each statement below based on your actual experience:
(1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Statement	Dimension	Rating
I am satisfied with my current job content	Job Content Satisfaction	1 2 3 4 5
The school provides good opportunities for professional development	Professional Development	1 2 3 4 5
I have harmonious working relationships with colleagues	Colleague Relationships	1 2 3 4 5
I feel supported by the school as an organization	Organizational Support	1 2 3 4 5
I am satisfied with the working environment	Work Environment	1 2 3 4 5

Team Cohesion

Please rate each statement below based on your actual experience:
(1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Statement	Dimension	Rating
Our team works together to achieve tasks	Task Cohesion	1 2 3 4 5
Team members communicate and interact well	Social Cohesion	1 2 3 4 5
The team has clear shared goals	Shared Goals	1 2 3 4 5
Team members trust and support each other	Team Relations	1 2 3 4 5
I am satisfied with the overall cohesion of the team	Overall Cohesion	1 2 3 4 5