

**THE INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPALS'
SERVANT LEADERSHIP AND
TEACHER ENGAGEMENT
ON TEACHER INTENTION TO STAY
IN THE SCHOOLS OF MALDIVES**

ABDUL LATHEEF ALI

UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

2023

**THE INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPALS'
SERVANT LEADERSHIP AND
TEACHER ENGAGEMENT
ON TEACHER INTENTION TO STAY
IN THE SCHOOLS OF MALDIVES**

by

ABDUL LATHEEF ALI

**Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

August 2023

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I praise and honour Allah, who strengthened me and sustained my hope throughout this journey.

A hearty thanks and sincere prayer to my dear father and mother, who raised me to be capable enough to reach this level of education.

I want to thank my first supervisor, Professor Dr. Abdul Ghani Kanesan Abdullah, who later became my co-supervisor after his retirement, and my first co-supervisor, Dr. Al-Amin Mydin, who later became my supervisor upon the retirement of Professor Dr. Abdul Ghani Kanesan Abdullah. I sincerely thank Dr. Al-Amin Mydin for making it possible for me to see the impossible through to reality in this journey, guiding and advising me through the ups and downs during the process. I thank him for being my champion and keeping me tight during the waves of COVID.

My wife, Fathimath Muhammad Didi, steered, pushed, and pulled me through the bends and curves. She is my pillar of inspiration and support. Muhammad Nawaaz Latheef, my son, was and is my rock of strength. I appreciate him for being very patient with my brother Hassan Latheef Ali and sisters Hawa Jameela Ali, Maryam Saeeda Ali, Aishath Saeeda Ali, and Aminath Jameela Ali for their concern and motivation.

A special thank you to my colleague Khadheeja Mazeena, for helping me in the qualitative data collection process. Thanks to my fellow principals for helping me to collect quantitative data. Thank you Shanis for the final proofreading.

Thank you, Nasir, for being the partner of storm and stress, happiness and pride, tactics and clues, during the journey. Keep the whistle blowing.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
LIST OF TABLES	xi
LIST OF FIGURES	xiv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xv
LIST OF APPENDICES	xvi
ABSTRAK	xvii
ABSTRACT	xix
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background	3
1.2.1 School System in the Maldives	3
1.2.2 Servant Leadership	5
1.2.3 Intention to Stay	7
1.2.4 Employee Engagement	10
1.3 Problem Statement	12
1.4 Research Objective	14
1.5 Research Question	14
1.6 Research Hypothesis	15
1.7 Significance of the Study	16
1.7.1 Theoretical Significance	16
1.7.2 Significance to Practitioners	17
1.7.3 Significance to Body of Knowledge	18

1.8	Limitations	19
1.9	Delimitations	19
1.10	Operational Definition	20
1.10.1	Servant Leadership	20
1.10.2	Intention to Stay	21
1.10.3	Employee Engagement	21
1.11	Summary	22
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW.....		23
2.1	Introduction	23
2.2	Servant Leadership	24
2.2.1	Conceptual Definition of Servant Leadership	25
2.2.2	The History of Servant Leadership	26
2.2.3	Greenleaf and His Contribution to Servant Leadership	27
2.2.4	The Development of Servant Leadership After Greenleaf	29
2.2.5	Attributes of Servant Leadership.....	32
2.2.6	Servant Leadership in Education	35
2.2.7	Servant Leadership and School Principal	40
2.2.8	Servant Leadership and Teachers	42
2.3	Intention to Stay	43
2.3.1	Conceptual Definition of Intention to Stay.....	44
2.3.2	History of Intention to Stay	45
2.3.3	Dimensions of Intension to Stay	48
2.3.3(a)	Job Satisfaction	48
2.3.3(b)	Organisational Commitment (OC)	53
2.3.3(c)	Employment Opportunity	56

2.3.4	Research Findings Related to Teacher Intention to Stay.....	58
2.4	Employee Engagement.....	62
2.4.1	Conceptual Definition of Employee Engagement.....	63
2.4.2	Conceptualisations of Employee Engagement.....	64
2.4.3	Dimensions of Employee Engagement	65
2.4.3(a)	Vigour	65
2.4.3(b)	Dedication	66
2.4.3(c)	Absorption	67
2.5	Servant Leadership and Intention to Stay.....	69
2.6	Servant Leadership and Employee Engagement.....	75
2.7	Employee Engagement and Intention to Stay.....	77
2.8	Employee Engagement Mediates Between Servant Leadership and Intention to Stay.....	82
2.9	Relevant Theories Related to This Research	84
2.9.1	Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX) (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995)	84
2.9.2	The Servant Leadership Model (Liden et al., (2014a)	91
2.9.3	The Intention to Stay Model (Roodt, 2004)	98
2.9.4	The Employee Engagement Model (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007)	102
2.10	Theoretical Framework.....	103
2.11	Conceptual Framework.....	105
2.12	Summary	107
	CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY	109
3.1	Introduction	109
3.2	Research Design	109

3.3	Research Framework	111
3.3.1	Independent Variable – Servant Leadership	112
3.3.2	Dependent Variable – Intention to Stay	113
3.3.3	Mediating Variable – Employee Engagement	114
3.4	Population and Sampling	116
3.4.1	Quantitative Survey	116
3.4.2	Qualitative Interview	117
3.5	Research Instrument	118
3.5.1	Quantitative Survey	118
3.5.1(a)	Section A, Respondent Background	118
3.5.1(b)	Section B, Servant Leadership	119
3.5.1(c)	Section C, Intention to Stay	120
3.5.1(d)	Section D, Employee Engagement	121
3.5.2	Qualitative Interview	122
3.6	Validity and Reliability of Instruments	122
3.6.1	Quantitative Survey	123
3.6.1(a)	Servant Leadership	123
3.6.1(b)	Intention to Stay	123
3.6.1(c)	Employee Engagement	124
3.6.2	Qualitative Interview	125
3.7	Pilot Study	126
3.7.1	Quantitative Survey	126
3.7.2	Qualitative Interview	129
3.8	Data Collection Procedure	129
3.9	Data Analysis Procedure	131

3.9.1	Descriptive Analysis Method	131
3.9.2	Inferential Analysis Method	132
3.9.3	Mediation Analysis Method	133
3.9.4.	Qualitative Analysis Method	137
3.10	Data Screening	141
3.10.1	Missing Data	141
3.10.2	Normality Test	141
3.10.3	Factor Analysis	142
3.10.3(a)	Factor Analysis of Principals’ Servant Leadership	144
3.10.3(b)	Factor Analysis of Teacher Intention to Stay	149
3.10.3(c)	Factor Analysis of Teacher Engagement	151
3.10.4	Intercorrelation among Dimensions of Variables	153
3.10.4(a)	Relationship between Principals’ Servant Leadership and Teacher Engagement	155
3.10.4(b)	Relationship between Teacher Engagement and Teacher Intention to Stay	158
3.11	Ethical Considerations	159
3.12	Summary.....	160
	CHAPTER 4 RESULTS	161
4.1	Introduction	161
4.2	Description of Completed Questionnaire	161
4.3	Profile of the Respondents	162
4.4	Descriptive Analysis Finding	164
4.4.1	Level of Principals’ Servant Leadership Practices in the Schools of the Maldives	165

4.4.2	Level of Teacher Intention to Stay in the Schools of the Maldives	170
4.4.3	Level of Teacher Engagement in the Schools of the Maldives	172
4.5	Inferential Analysis Finding	174
4.5.1	The Influence of Principals’ Servant Leadership on Teacher Intention to Stay	175
4.5.2	The Influence of Principals’ Servant Leadership on Teacher Engagement in the Schools of the Maldives	176
4.5.3	The Influence of Teacher Engagement on Teacher Intention to Stay in the Schools of the Maldives	179
4.6	Mediation Analysis Finding.....	180
4.6.1	The Mediating Influence of Teacher Engagement on the Relationship Between Principals’ Servant Leadership and Teacher Intention to Stay in the schools of the Maldives	181
4.7	Summary of Quantitative Findings	195
4.8	Qualitative Findings and Data Analysis	198
4.8.1	Exploring the Level of Servant Leadership among School Principals and how it is being Practiced in the Maldives from Teachers’ perspective	199
4.8.1(a)	Conceptual Skills	199
4.8.1(b)	Empowering	204
4.8.1(c)	Helping Followers Grow and Succeed	208
4.8.1(d)	Putting followers First	211
4.8.1(e)	Behaving Ethically	214
4.8.1(f)	Emotional Healing	217

4.8.1(g)	Creating Value for Community	220
4.9	Summary of Qualitative Findings	225
4.10	Summary	226
CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION		228
5.1	Introduction	228
5.2	Research Summary	228
5.3	Discussion of Findings	231
5.3.1	The Level of Principals' Servant Leadership in the Schools of the Maldives	231
5.3.2	The Level of Teacher Intention to Stay in the Schools of the Maldives	233
5.3.3	The Level of Teacher Engagement in the Schools of the Maldives	235
5.3.4	The Influence of Principals' Servant Leadership on Teacher Intention to Stay in the Schools of the Maldives	236
5.3.5	The Influence of Principals' Servant Leadership on Teacher Engagement in the Schools of the Maldives	242
5.3.6	The Influence of Teacher Engagement on Teacher Intention to Stay in the Schools of the Maldives	248
5.3.7	The Influence of Teacher Engagement as a Mediator on the Relationship Between Principals' Servant Leadership and Teacher Intention to Stay in the Schools of the Maldives	251
5.3.8	The Understanding of Servant Leadership Practices Among School Principals and How It Is Practiced in the Maldives	256
5.3.8(a)	Conceptual Skills	256
5.3.8(b)	Empowering	258

5.3.8(c)	Helping Followers Grow and Succeed	259
5.3.8(d)	Putting Followers First	260
5.3.8(e)	Behaving Ethically	261
5.3.8(f)	Emotional Healing	263
5.3.8(g)	Creating Value for Community	264
5.3.9	The Explanatory Findings from Quantitative and Qualitative Data.	265
5.3.9(a)	Conceptual Skills	266
5.3.9(b)	Empowering	267
5.3.9(c)	Helping Followers Grow and Succeed	269
5.3.9(d)	Putting Followers First	270
5.3.9(e)	Behaving Ethically	272
5.3.9(f)	Emotional Healing	273
5.3.9(g)	Creating Value for Community	275
5.4.	Research Implication	276
5.4.1	Implication on Theory	276
5.4.2	Implication on the Used Methodology	279
5.4.3	Implication on the Ministry of Education (MoE) Policy	279
5.4.4	Implication on Education Leadership Practices	281
5.4.5	Implication on Training at the Higher Education Institutes	282
5.4.6	Implication on Professional Development Programme	283
5.5.	Recommendations for Future Research	286
5.6.	Conclusion	287
	REFERENCES	288
	APPENDICES	

LIST OF TABLES

		Page
Table 2.1	Direct and Indirect Relationships	107
Table 3.1	Teachers in South Province, December 2019	117
Table 3.2	Servant Leadership Survey	119
Table 3.3	The Uni-dimensional Global Intention to Stay Scale.....	121
Table 3.4	Employee Engagement Scale UWES-9	121
Table 3.5	Reliability scores of Servant Leadership Survey	127
Table 3.6	Reliability scores of Intention to Stay Scale	128
Table 3.7	Reliability scores of Utrecht Work Engagement Scale	128
Table 3.8	Method of Analysis	136
Table 3.9	Coding system for analysing seven dimensions of servant leadership	137
Table 3.10	Agreement measures for Cohen’s Kappa coefficient	139
Table 3.11	Cohen’s Kappa coefficient for Servant Leadership dimensions	140
Table 3.12	Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis of Research Variables	142
Table 3.13	The Structural Factor and Loading Factor of Varimax Orthogonal Principals’ Servant Leadership	146
Table 3.14	The Structural Factor and Loading Factor of Varimax Orthogonal Teacher Intention to Stay	150
Table 3.15	The Structural Factor and Loading Factor of Varimax Orthogonal Teacher Engagement	152
Table 3.16	Bivariate Correlation between Dimensions of Principals’ Servant Leadership	154

Table 3.17	Bivariate Correlation between Dimensions of Teacher Engagement	155
Table 3.18	Bivariate Correlation between Dimensions of Principals' Servant Leadership and Teacher Engagement	156
Table 3.19	Bivariate Correlation between Dimensions of Teacher Engagement and Teacher Intention to Stay	158
Table 4.1	Summary of the Questionnaire Distributed and the Response Rate	162
Table 4.2	Demographic Profiles of respondents	163
Table 4.3	Mean score interpretation as per Nunnally and Bernstein (1994)	165
Table 4.4	Mean and standard deviation of Servant Leadership Items	166
Table 4.5	Mean and standard deviation of Intention to Stay Items	171
Table 4.6	Mean and standard deviation of Teacher Engagement Items	173
Table 4.7	Result of Regression Analysis	175
Table 4.8(a)	Result of Regression Analysis	177
Table 4.8(b)	Result of Regression Analysis	178
Table 4.9	Result of Regression Analysis	180
Table 4.10	Dedication as a mediator between Empowering and Intention to Stay	185
Table 4.11	Vigour as a mediator between Helping Followers Grow and Succeed and Intention to Stay	186
Table 4.12	Dedication as a mediator between Helping Followers Grow and Succeed and Intention to Stay	188
Table 4.13	Absorption as a mediator between Helping Followers Grow and Succeed and Intention to Stay	189

Table 4.14	Dedication as a mediator between Emotional Healing and Intention to Stay	190
Table 4.15	Teacher Engagement Predicted from Principals' Servant Leadership	192
Table 4.16	Teacher Intention to Stay Predicted from Teacher Engagement and Principal's Servant Leadership	193
Table 4.17	The effect of Principal's Servant Leadership on Teacher Intention to Stay	194
Table 4.18	Summary of Quantitative Findings	196
Table 4.19	Summary of HRM Analysis	197
Table 4.20	List of respondents for the interviews	198
Table 5.1	Triangulation of Conceptual dimension of Liden et al.'s (2008) Servant Leadership Model in the schools of the Maldives.....	267
Table 5.2	Triangulation of Empowering dimension of Liden et al.'s (2008) Servant Leadership Model in the schools of the Maldives.....	268
Table 5.3	Triangulation of Helping Followers Grow and Succeed dimension of Liden et al.'s (2008) Servant Leadership Model in the schools of the Maldives.....	270
Table 5.4	Triangulation of Putting Followers First dimension of Liden et al.'s (2008) Servant Leadership Model in the schools of the Maldives.....	271
Table 5.5	Triangulation of Behaving Ethically dimension of Liden et al.'s (2008) Servant Leadership Model in the schools of the Maldives.....	272

Table 5.6	Triangulation of Emotional Healing dimension of Liden et al.'s (2008) Servant Leadership Model in the schools of the Maldives.....	274
Table 5.7	Triangulation of Creating value for the Community dimension of Liden et al.'s (2008) Servant Leadership Model in the schools of the Maldives.....	275

LIST OF FIGURES

		Page
Figure 2.1	Liden’s model of servant leadership	93
Figure 2.2	Intention to Stay Model	99
Figure 2.3	Employee Engagement Model	102
Figure 2.4	Theoretical Framework for Principals’ Servant Leadership, Teacher Engagement and Teacher Intention to Stay	104
Figure 2.5	Research Conceptual Framework	106
Figure 3.1	Follow-Up Explanatory Sequential Design	113
Figure 3.2	Research Framework	113
Figure 3.3	Single Mediator Model (Baron & Kenny, 1986)	115
Figure 4.1	Summary of variables identification for mediator test in Teacher Intention to Stay for Dimension 1 of Servant Leadership: Empowering	183
Figure 4.2	Summary of variables identification for mediator test in Teacher Intention to Stay for Dimension 2 of Servant Leadership: Followers Grow and Succeed	183
Figure 4.3	Summary of variables identification for mediator test in Teacher Intention to Stay for Dimension 3 of Servant Leadership: Emotional Healing	184

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AC	Affective Commitment
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
CC	Continuance Commitment
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFS	Child-Friendly School
CFBS	Child-Friendly “Baraabaru” School
CFBSI	Child-Friendly Baraabaru School Indicators
CI	Confidence Interval
CSA	Core Self-Assessment
EDC	Educational Development Center
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
GWA	The Gallup Workplace Audit
HRD	Human Resources Development
JD-R	Job Demands Resources Model
K-12	Schools with classes from Kindergarten to high school
LMX	Leader-Member Exchange Theory
LPI	Leadership Practice Inventory
MaxQDA	Software package for qualitative and mixed methods research
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MNU	Maldives National University
MoE	Ministry of Education
NC	Normative Commitment
NCF	National Curriculum Framework
OC	Organizational Commitment
OCB	Organizational Citizenship Behavior

LIST OF APPENDICES

- APPENDIX A Permission Email from Liden Robert C, PhD to use Servant Leadership Survey
- APPENDIX B Permission Email from Gert Roodt, PhD to use Intention to Stay Scale
- APPENDIX C Permission Email from Wilmar B. Schaufeli, Ph.D to use Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWEC)
- APPENDIX D Survey Questionnaire
- APPENDIX E Interview Procedure
- APPENDIX F Interview Protocol
- APPENDIX G Permission Email from Marilyn K. Simon, PhD to use Interview Validation Rubric for Expert Panel – VREP Interview Questionnaire Assessment Rubric
- APPENDIX H Interview Questionnaire Assessment Rubric
- APPENDIX I Sample of Interview Transcription
- APPENDIX J Research Approval Letter from the School of Educational Studies of Universiti Sains Malaysia
- APPENDIX K Data Collection Approval from Ministry of Education, Maldives

**PENGARUH BAGI KEPIMPINAN KHIDMAT PENGETUA DAN
PENGLIBATAN GURU TERHADAP HASRAT GURU UNTUK KEKAL DI
SEKOLAH MALDIVES**

ABSTRAK

Kadar kehilangan guru yang tinggi di Maldives merupakan keprihatinan besar dalam sektor pendidikan awam. Kajian ini mengkaji impak kepemimpinan pelayan oleh principals terhadap niat guru untuk terus berkhidmat, dan peranan penglibatan guru sebagai perantara dalam hubungan ini. Kajian ini mendapati bahawa tingkah laku kepemimpinan pelayan oleh principals sekolah mempengaruhi secara signifikan niat guru untuk terus berkhidmat, sementara penglibatan guru memainkan peranan perantara dalam hubungan ini. Penemuan ini selaras dengan penyelidikan terdahulu dalam konteks budaya dan demografi lain. Kajian ini juga mendapati bahawa penciptaan persekitaran kerja yang positif dan membangkitkan minat bagi guru dapat meningkatkan niat mereka untuk terus berkhidmat. Dengan mengamalkan amalan kepemimpinan pelayan, principals sekolah dapat meningkatkan pemeliharaan guru, produktiviti, dan keseluruhan keberkesanan sekolah. Penemuan ini memberikan wawasan berharga bagi pembuat dasar dan praktisi pendidikan di Maldives dan dapat menyumbang kepada usaha berterusan untuk memperbaiki sistem pendidikan awam. Maldives telah mengalami peningkatan secara beransur-ansur dalam kadar kehilangan guru sejak tahun 2019, yang telah menimbulkan cabaran besar kepada sektor pendidikan awam. Kajian ini mengkaji impak kepemimpinan pelayan oleh principals terhadap niat guru untuk terus berkhidmat, dan peranan penglibatan guru sebagai perantara dalam hubungan ini. Kajian ini mendapati bahawa tingkah laku kepemimpinan pelayan oleh principals sekolah mempengaruhi secara signifikan niat

guru untuk terus berkhidmat, sementara penglibatan guru memainkan peranan perantara dalam hubungan ini. Penemuan ini selaras dengan penyelidikan terdahulu dalam konteks budaya dan demografi lain. Kajian ini juga mendapati bahawa penciptaan persekitaran kerja yang positif dan membangkitkan minat bagi guru dapat meningkatkan niat mereka untuk terus berkhidmat. Dengan mengamalkan amalan kepemimpinan pelayan, principals sekolah dapat meningkatkan pemeliharaan guru, produktiviti, dan keseluruhan keberkesanan sekolah. Penemuan ini memberikan wawasan berharga bagi pembuat dasar dan praktisi pendidikan di Maldives dan dapat menyumbang kepada usaha berterusan untuk memperbaiki sistem pendidikan awam.

**THE INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPALS' SERVANT LEADERSHIP
AND TEACHER ENGAGEMENT ON TEACHER INTENTION TO STAY IN
THE SCHOOLS OF MALDIVES**

ABSTRACT

The high teacher attrition rate in the Maldives is a major concern for the public education sector. This study investigated the impact of principals' servant leadership on teachers' intention to stay and the role of teacher engagement as a mediator in this relationship. The study found that servant leadership behaviors of school principals significantly influence teachers' intention to stay, while teacher engagement plays a mediating role in this relationship. This finding is consistent with previous research in other cultural and demographic contexts. The study also found that creating a positive and engaging work environment for teachers can foster their intention to stay. By implementing servant leadership practices, school principals can enhance teacher retention, productivity, and overall school effectiveness. These findings offer valuable insights for policymakers and educational practitioners in the Maldives and can contribute to the ongoing efforts to improve the public education system. The Maldives has been experiencing a gradual increase in teacher attrition since 2019, which has posed a significant challenge to the public education sector. This study investigated the impact of principals' servant leadership on teachers' intention to stay, and the role of teacher engagement as a mediator in this relationship. The study found that servant leadership behaviors of school principals significantly influence teachers' intention to stay, while teacher engagement plays a mediating role in this relationship. This finding is consistent with previous research in other cultural and demographic contexts. The study also found that creating a positive and engaging work environment for teachers

can foster their intention to stay. By implementing servant leadership practices, school principals can enhance teacher retention, productivity, and overall school effectiveness. These findings offer valuable insights for policymakers and educational practitioners in the Maldives and can contribute to the ongoing efforts to improve the public education system.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Teacher continuity without attrition is of great importance in the field of education. It refers to the idea of retaining experienced and qualified teachers in schools, increasing their intention to stay, and promoting stability within the teaching workforce (Nasir & Mahmood, 2016). Teachers play a fundamental role in shaping the educational experiences of students. When teachers stay in the profession and in the same school over an extended period, they develop a deep understanding of the curriculum, student needs, and effective instructional strategies. This expertise leads to improved teaching practices and enhances educational outcomes for students (Kini & Podolsky, 2016).

High attrition rates among teachers result in significant costs for school districts. Recruiting and training new teachers can be an expensive process, not to mention the potential disruption caused by the loss of institutional knowledge and experience. By retaining teachers, schools can save resources and invest them in other areas to support student learning. Efforts to promote teacher intention to stay includes focusing on school leadership, improving working conditions, and creating a supportive environment that recognizes and values the contributions of teachers (Arroyo, 2020). According to the literature, school leadership emerges as the sole factor consistently referenced by both individuals who remain in the field and those who choose to leave (Ingersoll et al., 2018). By prioritizing teacher intention to stay, schools can foster stability, improve educational outcomes, and create an environment conducive to both student and teacher success.

Teachers who intend to stay in a school for an extended period contribute to the development of a positive school climate and culture. They become familiar faces in the community, gain a deeper understanding of the school's values and mission, and collaborate effectively with colleagues. This stability creates a sense of belonging and pride, positively impacting the overall learning environment (Arroyo, 2020).

The education system in the Maldives has undergone several restructuring efforts in recent years, which have had a significant impact on the teaching workforce. In 2014, the pay scales for teachers were restructured with the expectation that it would lead to better salaries (MoE, 2014). However, when the new structure was introduced, the pay turned out to be much lower than what teachers had anticipated. Some teachers even received lower salaries than before the restructuring. This came as a shock to many teachers and caused widespread disappointment among the teaching community. In 2015, the Ministry of Education further restructured the school system by removing the position of deputy principal from schools (MoE, 2015). Deputy principals were either asked to find other suitable jobs or accept lower positions in their current or other schools. This decision once again came as a severe shock to the deputy principals employed in public schools.

Adding to the series of changes, in 2019, the Ministry of Education restructured the school system once more. This time, leading teachers were reverted back to regular teacher positions, and their role as leading teachers was designated as a temporary assignment (MoE, 2019a). The leading teachers were unhappy about this change, and some were forced to return to regular teacher positions without their consent. This was yet another shock in the sequence of changes. These shocks, along with education policies and a sense of dissatisfaction towards education bureaucracies, may have contributed to increased anxiety levels among new teachers. They could

also be factors in the dissatisfaction experienced by the entire teaching community, leading to the attrition of both new and experienced teachers.

While there is currently no literature available on teacher attrition, turnover, intention to stay, intent to leave, or retention in the Maldives, studies conducted elsewhere have explored various factors and challenges related to teacher turnover and intention to stay. In a study by Ingersoll et al. (2018), it was acknowledged that there is a pressing need for highly qualified teachers in public schools in the United States, primarily driven by smaller class sizes and the increasing demand for specialized teachers in fields such as special education, mathematics, and the sciences. The Ministry of Education (MoE) in the Maldives has recently implemented a similar initiative aimed at reducing class sizes from 32 to 25 and ensuring the inclusion of special needs children within the public school system, aligning with the principles of the universal No Child Left Behind policy.

1.2 Background

This section discusses school education in the Maldives, followed by the three variables of the study: servant leadership, intention to stay, and employee engagement.

1.2.1 School System in the Maldives

Education first began in the Maldives in the 1960s, with most students attending one of the two government schools in Malé. The introduction of the two schools shifted the medium of instruction from Dhivehi, the official language of the Maldives, to English. The two schools followed the imported London General Certificate Education curriculum for secondary schools. In the early 1990s, secondary school education was available only in Malé. Few pre-schools, primary schools, and Dhivehi medium schools existed, but only in the capital, Malé.

In 1978, one of the essential changes in Maldivian education was the decision to move towards a unified national education system and encourage the equal distribution of facilities and services to all islands. The strategies consisted of developing a consistent syllabus for classes one to seven, enhancing the training of teachers, and establishing and renovating other schools in the atolls. The main emphasis of the strategy has been on providing elementary education to all children.

In 1999, a significant curriculum review and broad consultations with stakeholders began. Between 2004 and 2005, the Education Development Centre (EDC) made substantial instructional content changes. The English and mathematical curricula were updated to outcome-based ones, and all other subjects were also revised. An outcome-based programme explains what students learn and can do through teaching. The outcome-based approach defines specific expectations all students should meet to help them learn curriculum-wide subjects more effectively.

In 2002, the MoE launched the idea of Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) in a group of five schools with funding from UNICEF. Since then, the CFS has expanded to make more schools child-friendly. After adopting the CFS concept, the MoE converted it into a Maldivian version under ‘Child-Friendly Baraabaru Schools’ (CFBS). Additionally, the Ministry of Education introduced a new model of school evaluation using specific metrics linked to the child-friendly school concept backed by the CFS philosophy. Since its implementation in 2011, the structure of school supervision, which has been in place, has changed significantly with the new criteria of the Child-Friendly Baraabaru School Indicators (CFBSI). Proper school management through positive leadership is one of CFBS’s primary objectives (MoE, 2010).

In 2015, a new version of the curriculum was released after several changes. The new curriculum focuses on enhancing students' growing talents with the latest innovations and technology. The purpose of the new version of the national curriculum is to encourage the development of productive individuals who are self-motivated to learn and improve. The curriculum also fosters a deep faith in Islam, a strong sense of individual and national identity, and active and accountable membership in their families, communities, and the larger society.

In 2019, the school improvement quality assurance and accountability framework (SIQAAF) followed the CFBS quality framework as a quality-control monitoring and evaluation tool. The framework offers teachers, school administrators, parents, other school community members, and the Ministry of Education a realistic framework for assessing how effectively and observably the different 'quality elements' are applied. This is founded on the conviction that various dimensions of the system must be addressed to achieve quality in a school (MoE, 2019b).

According to the quality assurance standards of the Ministry of Education Maldives, if school leaders collectively collaborate with the school community through concurrence to assess school performance and create strategies to resolve priority areas, the school quality system can become the most efficient (MoE, 2010). This quality assurance requirement is consistent with servant leadership behaviours that push organisations to reevaluate their interactions with individuals, organisations, and society.

1.2.2 Servant Leadership

Popular thought credits Greenleaf (1977) with the idea of introducing servant leadership as a solution to address the leadership dilemma that was beginning to take

hold at the time. Greenleaf (1977) says greatness comes from leaders who are first recognised as servants. Therefore, a leader's values, viewpoints, and interests should centre on things for which they are accountable rather than personal preferences. The author stressed the importance of inspiration, asserting that inspired people can influence how civilisation develops in the future. Greenleaf's assertion that motivation and inspiration are crucial components of effective leadership agrees with that of many leadership theorists. To give his theory more depth, the author added that influential leaders might influence others appropriately, even if their intentions and leadership style were kept secret.

Greenleaf's (1977) servant leadership concept illustrates leaders' inner feelings as the willingness to serve. That selfless willingness to serve identifies leaders as servants first and leaders second (Russell, 2001). The leader's greatness is based on helping others, and even though servant leaders are servants first, they can be great leaders because they are both sides of the same coin (Greenleaf, 1977). Servant leaders are sincerely concerned about people and serve and reflect on their followers' needs sacrificially. They reach beyond meeting people's needs within the organisation but often prioritise personal interests to fulfil their needs (Crippen & Willows, 2019).

Being a servant leader can improve team connections, raise involvement, and develop trust; nevertheless, it still requires the fundamental leadership qualities, experience, and character attributes universally recognised as necessary to guide people (Liden et al., 2014a). The crucial contrast between servant leadership and other leadership approaches is not the quality of decisions made but rather the accountability and input from followers that servant leaders exhibit.

This study utilised Liden et al.'s (2008) model among the many servant leadership models. Three essential elements of the model are prior conditions, servant leadership behaviour, and outcomes. The model tries to contextualise and explain the dynamics of the servant leadership phenomenon. The core of the servant leadership process comprises seven behaviours identified by this model's key component. The extensive efforts made by Liden et al. (2008) to create and validate a servant leadership degree led to the development of those behaviours. Their study's findings demonstrated the validity of viewing servant leadership as a multifaceted process. The core of servant leadership is these behaviours taken as a whole. This study utilised this model to explore the influence of principals' servant leadership on teacher intention to stay in the schools of the Maldives.

Ali (2013) studied secondary teachers' perspectives for the first year of teaching in the Maldives and highlighted an important issue regarding teachers' job satisfaction and retention concerning management and leadership. One critical concern raised by the teachers was that their opinions were not considered during decision-making regarding teaching, learning, and curriculum-related discussions. They were disappointed that school administrators never requested new teachers' input when making important decisions. Some participants identified their school climate as having a top-down hierarchical structure with little input from new or experienced teachers (Ali, 2013). The findings reinforced the value of considering servant leadership to serve better, improve, and motivate teachers and their intention to stay.

1.2.3 Intention to Stay

Intention to stay refers to the different policies and practices that allow and encourage employees to remain with their current employer for an extended period

(Naim & Lenka, 2017). Each organisation invests time and money in training new staff, making them a ready-made corporate product, and putting them on a par with the current staff. The organisation is at a loss when the workers leave their jobs once fully trained (Mobley et al., 1979).

Intention to stay is based on the social exchange theory, which research has utilised to examine many organisational relationships, including between employers and employees, employees and co-workers, and even the employee's relationship with the organisation (Thibaut & Kelley, 2017). Social exchange theory says that when people interact with each other in several ways, like when employers help their employees, a sense of obligation develops (Thibaut & Kelley, 2017). Employees respond by wanting to do their jobs well and with a good attitude, as shown by their organisational commitment. Research shows that similar exchanges or interactions between co-workers can make people feel the same obligation and want to do good things in return (Thibaut & Kelley, 2017). When organisations give their employees a good workplace, they will respond with loyalty by feeling emotionally connected to their organisations. The exchange relationship between employees and their organisations results in employees being committed to their organisations (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

Several studies have explored what predicts and influences a person's intention to stay. Mobley et al. (1979) demonstrated that employees are less likely to quit their jobs if they're satisfied with what they do or feel and are committed to the organisation they work for. According to the intention model developed by Price and Mueller (1981), job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and the perception of employment options were all factors that impacted the intention to stay. Martin and Roodt's (2008) research on intention to stay showed that work engagement and

commitment to the organisation were frequently employed as variables. The researchers stated that organisational commitment and job satisfaction would most likely determine an individual's intention to stay in their current position. According to Roodt's (2004) study, an employee's desire to stay at their current job is influenced by job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and employment opportunities. This study used these factors as variables to study how likely teachers are to stay in their current profession in the schools of the Maldives.

Martin and Roodt (2008) said that organisational commitment is often a factor in studies of intention to stay. Their results link commitment to the organisation with an intention to stay. Organisational commitment is a person's connection to and involvement with work organisations. It means that the person cares about the organisation's goals and is willing to work hard to reach them (Ramalho Luz et al., 2018). Alrowwad et al. (2019) discussed an organisational commitment model with three parts that can be examined together: affective, continuance, and normative. They also said that employees could have different levels of organisational commitment.

Further to job satisfaction and organisational commitment, employment opportunity is a factor that mediates the relationship between intention to stay and job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Price & Mueller, 1981). Employment opportunities can be affected by factors such as ease of movement, the attractiveness of motion, mobility, the crystallisation of career options, and networking (Brasher, 2016).

1.2.4 Employee Engagement

Human resource managers, practitioners, and consulting firms have become very interested in employee engagement. In the last few decades, dozens of studies

and meta-analyses have been published on the topic (Saks & Gruman, 2014). Employee engagement has been operationalised and measured in many ways, so it's not surprising that there isn't a single definition for it.

Kahn (1990) introduced the concept of engagement and said that to be engaged means to be physically and mentally present when filling a role and doing work for an organisation. It entails investing one's body, mind, and heart into one's task. Schaufeli et al. (2002) defined engagement as a pleasant, satisfying, work-related mental state characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption. Engagement refers to a more lasting and widespread affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any single object, event, person, or behaviour as opposed to a transient and specific condition.

Maslach and Leiter (2008) extended Kahn's concept of engagement by tying it to the antithesis of burnout. In constructing their methodology, Schaufeli et al. (2002) claimed that burnout and work engagement are distinct concepts that must be assessed separately.

Kowske et al. (2009) defined employee engagement as the extent to which employees are driven to contribute to the organisation's success and are willing to make extra efforts to complete tasks vital to attaining the organisation's goals. Utilising a positive psychological point of view that centres on teacher interaction, De Stercke et al. (2015) proposed that teachers who are committed to their workplace environment are highly likely to remain in the teaching profession for a longer period of time than teachers who are not. Engaged educators are concerned with the quality of the education they provide, as seen by their classroom activities (Cardwell, 2011). They investigate new ideas, implement the best teaching techniques, change lessons to match the educational requirements of their students, have high expectations for

their students, assume responsibility for student learning, routinely monitor student achievement, and provide students with feedback (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Schools need to be equipped with quality teachers who are engaged in their classrooms and enjoy teaching. Teachers who care about the success of their schools are likely to help their students. However, leadership style may influence teachers' satisfaction and involvement in their work (Shaw & Newton, 2014). School leaders who practise servant leadership could positively impact teachers' engagement and intention to stay. There may be a connection between the servant leadership of school leaders and teachers' engagement. The influence on teachers may be the same in light of what research suggests about servant leadership's positive effects.

1.3 Problem Statement

In recent years, the Maldives' Ministry of Education's announcement regarding the hiring of expatriate primary teachers after 15 years has sparked concerns about the scarcity of local teachers (Asima, 2019). The decision to rely more heavily on expatriate teachers for the primary section has raised apprehension within the Ministry of Education (Malsa, 2019). This research aims to address the pressing issue of teacher scarcity in the Maldives by understanding the reasons behind teachers leaving the profession and exploring strategies to retain them.

Annual statistics from the Ministry of Education provide evidence of the growing shortage of local teachers in the country. Despite minimal changes in the number of schools and student population in the past five years, the student population per school has experienced a nominal increase of only 4-15 students annually (MoE, 2017, 2018, 2019c). This slight increment in student population does not significantly

disrupt schools' staffing requirements, indicating that the need for additional teachers is not solely due to a sudden surge in student numbers.

However, deeper analysis of the statistics reveals a concerning trend in the teaching workforce. While the number of teachers has gradually increased over the years, the proportion of local teachers has witnessed a significant decline. The data shows that the percentage of local teachers decreased from 75% to 73% in 2018 and further dropped from 73% to 71% in 2019, representing an average decrease of 2% per year (MoE, 2017, 2018, 2019c). This downward trend is projected to continue, as highlighted by Asima (2019) and Malsa (2019), who reported that the Maldives is on the brink of losing its local teachers entirely. If this decline persists at the current pace, the country will face substantial challenges in addressing the loss of local teachers.

To comprehend the factors contributing to teacher attrition, it is crucial to explore the existing literature. Studies conducted by Ingersoll et al. (2018) consistently cite school leadership as the single most influential factor affecting teachers' intention to stay in the field. Effective leadership practices significantly impact teacher satisfaction, professional development opportunities, and the overall work environment, leading to a higher level of intention to remain in the teaching profession (Arroyo, 2020).

Furthermore, employee engagement has been identified as a critical element in reducing turnover rates. Engaged teachers demonstrate higher levels of commitment, productivity, and work quality. Their sense of pride and inspiration in their work make it challenging for them to consider leaving (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007).

Therefore, this research aims to examine the reasons behind teachers leaving the teaching profession in the Maldives, with a specific focus on the decline of local teachers. By examining the factors influencing teacher attrition and identifying effective strategies for teacher retention, this study seeks to find out how principal leadership and teacher engagement influence teacher intention to stay in the school in the Maldives and inform educational policymakers, administrators, and stakeholders about evidence-based measures to address the scarcity of local teachers. The findings will contribute to the development and implementation of targeted policies and interventions that can ensure the stability and quality of primary education in the Maldives. Ultimately, this research strives to enhance the education system, benefiting students, teachers, and the nation as a whole, based on the evidence of the growing problem of teacher scarcity and the need for retention strategies.

1.4 Research Objective

The study examined the mediating effect of teacher engagement on the relationship between principals' servant leadership and teacher intention to stay in schools in the Maldives. The specific objectives of the study are as follows.

1. To determine the level of principals' servant leadership practices, teacher engagement, and teacher intention to stay in the schools of the Maldives.
2. To analyse the influence of principals' servant leadership practices on teacher intention to stay in the schools of the Maldives.
3. To analyse the influence of principals' servant leadership practices on teacher engagement in the schools of the Maldives.

4. To analyse the influence of teacher engagement on teacher intention to stay in the schools of the Maldives.
5. To analyse the influence of teacher engagement as a mediator between principals' servant leadership practices and teacher intention to stay in the schools of the Maldives.
6. To explore the understanding of servant leadership practices among school principals and how they are practised in the schools of the Maldives from teachers' perspectives.

1.5 Research Questions

In relation to the aforesaid objectives, the following research questions were investigated:

1. What is the level of principals' servant leadership practices, teacher engagement, and teacher intention to stay in the schools of the Maldives?
2. Do the principals' servant leadership practices significantly influence teachers' intention to stay in the schools of the Maldives?
3. Do the principals' servant leadership practices significantly influence teacher engagement in the schools of the Maldives?
4. Does teacher engagement significantly influence teacher intention to stay in the schools of the Maldives?
5. Does the influence of teacher engagement significantly mediate the relationship between principals' servant leadership practices and the teacher's intention to stay in the schools of the Maldives?

6. What is the understanding of servant leadership among school principals, and how is it being practised in the Maldives from the teachers' perspective?

1.6 Research Hypothesis

Four hypotheses were developed to examine all the influential causes of the research issues. The first set of research hypotheses investigated the impact of the principal's servant leadership behaviours on teacher intention to stay and engagement. The second set of hypotheses examined teacher engagement on teacher intention to stay. The third set of hypotheses analysed teacher engagement's mediating influence on the relationship between principals' servant leadership practices and teachers' intention to stay.

H₀₁ There is no significant influence of principals' servant leadership practices on teacher intention to stay in the schools of the Maldives.

H₀₂ There is no significant influence of principals' servant leadership practices on teacher engagement in the schools of the Maldives.

H₀₃ There is no significant influence of teacher engagement on teacher intention to stay in the schools of the Maldives.

H₀₄ There is no significant mediating influence of teacher engagement in the relationship between principals' servant leadership practices and teacher intention to stay in the schools of the Maldives.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The research's importance lies in recognising the connection between servant leadership and teacher retention, depending on the degree of intention to stay and

engagement at work. Servant leadership favours the community, retains successful teachers, fulfils their teaching responsibilities, and sustains a high degree of motivation. Assisting leadership in maintaining a professional workforce, being happy with their teaching role, and being inspired to maintain a high standard will support the school community and the country.

1.7.1 Theoretical Significance

This study contributes to the current body of knowledge by providing a more in-depth examination of the impact of servant leadership styles on the workplace, particularly in the setting of school principals. It also contributes to the body of knowledge by evaluating servant leadership's relative impacts on school teachers' retention based on their intention to stay. Previous research shows that the servant leadership style affects the school environment (Black, 2010) and teacher retention (Shaw & Newton, 2014). Still, it hasn't found a link between the servant leadership style and teachers' intention to stay in the Maldivian schools. The results of this study would also add to the research on teachers' intention to stay by giving an overview of the servant leadership behaviours that encourage teachers' engagement with their organisation and their intention to stay.

1.7.2 Significance to Practitioners

The research will contribute to teacher intention to stay and provide school leaders with leadership strategies to reduce teacher turnover and boost student achievement. If teachers can be retained on staff and the school administration can show servant leadership, the effects on the economy and education can be huge. Further, schools would cut administrative expenses, attract more qualified teachers, form relationships, and develop trust between themselves and students.

According to the findings of research on the retention of teachers by Goldberg and Proctor (2000), the desire to interact with kids is the most critical trait for someone considering a career in education. To ensure their success, the teachers need administrative support. Most teachers in the study indicated that school administrators' approval could allow them to continue teaching and stay in school district jobs (Goldberg & Proctor, 2000). An administrator's high degree of influence is a significant factor in the teacher's professional importance. There is an ongoing problem involving students in school and classroom activities, and any work that analyses the contextual nature of servant leadership will help with these issues.

Supporting teachers reduces tensions, contributing to high engagement, low turnover, and the development of high-performing teachers (Kent et al., 2009). This research will help school leaders reflect on their practice. The relational factors allow school leadership to concentrate on issues that could shift a teacher's direction away from leaving school and help teachers become more satisfied and dedicated educators, resulting in a greater intention to stay in the profession. This study will also help to direct administrative resources and expertise to establish better ties with people and enable more people to become teachers.

Leadership is integral to encouraging teachers to stay in the education business. This study's analysis will help determine how the leader substantially impacts teachers. If leaders can positively boost morale and impact teachers by promoting a teacher's development, they provide the potential for success (Yost, 2006). All schools in the Maldives are said to have teacher turnover issues. If one mitigating retention factor could be applied to a school's leadership to help teachers improve engagement and strengthen their intention to stay, the information learned would benefit all the schools in the country.

1.7.3 Significance to Body of Knowledge

The comparative analysis of the study would contribute to the current body of knowledge and has the potential to be used in upcoming principal-focused leadership development programmes. If existing administrators in the area better understood the factors contributing to a more pleasant school atmosphere by increasing teacher intention to stay, they might be better positioned to save money, time, and effort while making investments or decisions. Additionally, principal mentoring and professional development can support principals in overtly demonstrating their leadership style. School superintendents can also use the study's findings to determine the traits for selecting principals and to advise higher authorities on the necessary policy changes for effective school management.

1.8 Limitations

The research design, which includes sample size, population, and geographical location, influences the potential to generalise research results to certain contexts, cultures, and geographical areas. With the participating schools belonging to the Maldives' south province, the variations in geographic location, cultural diversity, and leadership styles are distinctive to other areas of the country. The fact that each participant is unique and has varying levels of leadership experience in their workplaces affects how they interpret the questionnaire items and the response questions. The participant's level of awareness and engagement with their leaders may be another factor affecting how they regard servant leadership characteristics in their work environment.

The survey responses were self-reported, and the information will remain anonymous. The survey did not require personally identifiable information to protect

participants' anonymity and ensure the answers' truthfulness. Participants may have felt obligated to react favourably to the issue of servant leadership, and by maintaining anonymity, this was resolved. In offering an online survey platform and a guarantee of anonymity, social desirability interventions may have been avoided; however, there is a risk of compromising accounts for the response figure, as principals in small communities are very much related to most of the teachers.

1.9 Delimitations

This study was limited to teachers who completed a year of service at the same school with a minimum teaching diploma qualification. Excluded were the teachers who were either temporarily employed, applied for early retirement, or worked on another island. Teachers without internet access and the school's official email were also excluded from participating in this study. Besides, Dhivehi, Islam, and Qur'an teachers who could not respond alone in the Google environment were also excluded to ensure anonymity.

1.10 Operational Definition

The operational definitions include the research variables: servant leadership, intention to stay, and employee engagement. Each variable is described along with its respective dimensions and measures.

1.10.1 Servant Leadership

Servant Leadership is an approach to leadership that prioritizes the well-being of those being served. It revolves around the belief that leaders who can truly inspire their followers place less importance on fulfilling their personal needs and instead focus primarily on meeting the needs of their followers (Liden et al., 2008). The study

utilizes the existing questionnaire named the Servant Leadership Survey (Liden et al., 2008), measuring seven attributes of Liden's Servant Leadership Model.

- a) **Conceptual skills:** the expertise of the principal in addressing the job challenges and recognizing the priorities of the school,
- b) **Empowering:** the degree to which the principal confers accountability, autonomy, and control over decision-making on the teachers,
- c) **Helping followers grow and succeed:** capturing the degree to which the principal allows teachers to reach their full potential and their career success,
- d) **Putting followers first:** evaluating the degree to which the principal prioritizes satisfying teachers' needs before addressing the principal's own needs,
- e) **Behaving ethically:** being trustworthy, honest, and serving as a model of integrity,
- f) **Emotional healing:** the degree to which the principal is concerned about the teachers' problems and well-being, and
- g) **Creating value for the community:** the principals' interest in supporting the island community and encouraging teachers to participate in community activities

1.10.2 Intention to Stay

Intention to Stay is an organisation's ability to make employees willing to continue their current employment. It is a phenomenon in which workers continue with their current employers and do not actively look for other job opportunities (Roodt, 2004). It is the mechanism by which an organisation ensures that its workers

do not intend to leave their jobs (Roodt, 2004). The study utilizes the existing Questionnaire, the Intention to Stay Scale, to measure the Intention to Stay globally.

1.10.3 Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is a favourable mental attitude towards work, exemplified by vigour, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Employees who are vested in their employment are more likely to exert physical effort. They are more likely to be cognitively and emotionally attached to their professions if they perceive their work to be more significant (Schaufeli et al., 2002). The study utilizes the existing questionnaire, named the Work & Well-being Survey (UWES-9) (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), measuring three components of Schaufeli's Work Engagement Model.

- a) **Vigour:** high energy and mental endurance while working as a teacher, and the willingness to invest effort and determination even in the face of students' and parents' problems.
- b) **Dedication:** a sense of passion, motivation, pride, and challenge as a teacher
- c) **Absorption:** being wholly focused and happily engaged as a teacher, whereby time passes rapidly and teachers have trouble removing themselves from work.

1.11 Summary

This study investigated the impact of principals' servant leadership on teachers' intentions to stay in the Maldives. Also examined was the moderating effect of teacher engagement on the relationship between servant leadership and the teacher intention to stay. It is vital to consider leadership theories and values aligned with one

of the most prominent emerging ideas as school principals strive for their schools to achieve success by retaining happy and satisfied teachers. Besides, recognising how leadership styles affect schools' organisational effectiveness will extract helpful knowledge.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The study aims to determine the influence of servant leadership on teachers' intention to stay in schools in the Maldives. Furthermore, this influence is examined through the mediating variable of teacher engagement. The literature review begins with the three research variables: servant leadership, intention to stay, and employee engagement. Each variable is highlighted with its concept, history, theory, and practice. The review then progresses to the relevant theories related to this research and the theoretical research framework, which lay the foundation for investigating the association between servant leadership and the intention to stay with the mediating influence of employee engagement. Finally, the chapter concludes by presenting the conceptual framework on which the study is based.

An extensive review of servant leadership, intention to stay, and employee engagement literature provides insights into the theories and practices. However, there are gaps in the literature demonstrating how servant leadership, in its practical version, can effectively benefit an organisation (Page & Wong, 2000). This study aims to contribute to the understanding of how servant leadership helps an organisation. Additionally, it aims to demonstrate how servant leadership encourages teachers to remain in their existing roles in Maldivian schools.

On servant leadership and employee engagement, there has been no research done in the Maldives that has been mentioned in the literature. The literature on intention to stay, employee retention, and employee turnover is scarce. This study

examines the literature on a few studies on instructional leadership and employee turnover. The review primarily reviewed studies conducted in other countries where similar interests exist.

2.2 Servant Leadership

Servant leadership is a logical inconsistency. It is a way of leading that goes against what makes sense. How we view leadership daily is not consistent with servant leadership, in which leaders inspire their followers to follow in their footsteps. What ways are there for leaders to support and influence each other? How is it feasible for a single individual to act simultaneously as a leader and a servant? Although servant leadership might appear paradoxical or question the old notions about leadership, it is nonetheless a method that offers a fresh and original viewpoint.

Since Greenleaf's works from 1970 to 1977, servant leadership has drawn the attention of leading researchers. This fascination spans more than forty years. Until recently, very few empirical studies on servant leadership were published in reputable journals that experts reviewed. The vast majority of academic and non-academic literature on the topic was prescriptive, concentrating on how servant leadership theory would be used in practice instead of being descriptive (van Dierendonck, 2011). However, during the past decade, numerous studies have clarified the notion of servant leadership and validated its unique perspectives.

The concept of servant leadership refers to a strategy that examines managing from the leader's perspective and the leader's actions. The idea of servant leadership emphasises how administrators should pay attention to the requirements of their people, empathise with them, and help them. Followers come first for servant leaders, who aim to motivate and support their development to reach their most remarkable