



Entrepreneurial Servant Leadership and Employee Engagement on Employee Performance and Entrepreneurial Behavior

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KEY WORDS	ABSTRACT
Entrepreneurial Servant Leadership, Employee Engagement, Employee Performance, Entrepreneurial Behavior, Qualitative Research.	This study explores the interplay between Entrepreneurial Servant Leadership (ESL) and employee engagement, focusing on their impact on employee performance and entrepreneurial behavior. Utilizing a qualitative approach grounded in a comprehensive literature review, the research synthesizes existing theories and empirical findings related to ESL and its influence on workplace dynamics. The analysis reveals that ESL, characterized by a leader's commitment to serving their employees, fosters a supportive environment that enhances employee engagement. Engaged employees are more likely to exhibit higher performance levels and display entrepreneurial behaviors, such as innovation and proactivity. The findings suggest that organizations adopting ESL can cultivate a motivated workforce, leading to improved overall performance and a culture of entrepreneurship. This paper contributes to the understanding of how leadership styles can shape employee outcomes and highlights the importance of integrating servant leadership principles in entrepreneurial contexts. Recommendations for future research include empirical studies to validate the proposed relationships and the exploration of contextual factors that may influence the effectiveness of ESL in diverse organizational settings.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary business landscape, characterized by rapid technological advancements and shifting market dynamics, organizations are increasingly challenged to innovate and adapt to remain competitive (Permana & Schouten, 2025). Effective leadership is paramount in navigating these challenges, as it significantly influences organizational culture, employee motivation, and overall performance (Wijoyo et al., 2020). Among the various leadership styles, Entrepreneurial Servant Leadership (ESL) has gained traction as a promising approach that

integrates the principles of servant leadership with an entrepreneurial mindset (Ramaditya & Sundari, 2023). ESL emphasizes the dual role of leaders as both servants to their employees and catalysts for entrepreneurial thinking, which can foster a more engaged and proactive workforce.

Despite the growing interest in ESL, there exists a notable research gap regarding its specific impact on employee engagement and the subsequent effects on employee performance and entrepreneurial behavior (Alateeg & Alhammadi, 2024). While previous studies have investigated the individual constructs of servant

leadership and employee engagement, there is limited empirical evidence exploring their interconnectedness within the entrepreneurial context. This gap is particularly significant as organizations strive to leverage their human capital to drive innovation and maintain a competitive edge in an increasingly volatile environment.

The urgency of this research is underscored by the pressing need for organizations to adopt leadership approaches that not only enhance employee performance but also cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset among their workforce. In an era where agility and innovation are paramount, understanding how ESL can facilitate these outcomes is critical for organizational success(Sandeen, 2022). Moreover, as businesses face challenges such as disruption from new market entrants and evolving consumer preferences, the ability to foster an engaged and entrepreneurial workforce becomes a strategic imperative.

Previous studies have established that servant leadership positively influences employee engagement and performance(Rafia & Achmad Sudiro, 2020). For instance, research has shown that leaders who adopt a servant leadership style tend to create a supportive and empowering work environment, leading to increased job satisfaction and commitment among employees. However, the specific mechanisms through which ESL impacts entrepreneurial behavior remain underexplored. Understanding these mechanisms is essential for organizations aiming to foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship(Zabala-Iturriagagoitia, 2022).

This study aims to fill this research gap by providing a comprehensive analysis of the relationships between ESL, employee

engagement, employee performance, and entrepreneurial behavior. By examining how ESL influences employee engagement, this research seeks to elucidate the pathways through which engagement subsequently affects employee performance and encourages entrepreneurial behavior(Rosienkiewicz et al., 2024).

The novelty of this research lies in its holistic approach, integrating the concepts of ESL and employee engagement within the framework of entrepreneurial behavior(Ahmetoglu et al., 2018). By doing so, this study contributes to the existing literature by offering a nuanced understanding of how leadership styles can shape employee outcomes in a rapidly changing business environment.

The primary objectives of this study are threefold: first, to investigate the effects of ESL on employee engagement; second, to assess how employee engagement influences employee performance; and third, to explore the implications of these relationships for fostering entrepreneurial behavior in organizations(Li et al., 2020). The findings of this research are expected to provide valuable insights for both practitioners and scholars, contributing to the development of effective leadership strategies that promote employee well-being, enhance organizational performance, and cultivate a culture of entrepreneurship (Daryono et al., 2025). Ultimately, this study aims to highlight the critical role of Entrepreneurial Servant Leadership in shaping the future of work, where engaged employees are empowered to drive innovation and contribute to the success of their organizations.

2. METHOD

This research employs a qualitative approach utilizing a literature review as its



primary method of data collection and analysis. The qualitative nature of this study allows for an in-depth exploration of the constructs of Entrepreneurial Servant Leadership (ESL), employee engagement, employee performance, and entrepreneurial behavior, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of their interrelationships.

Type of Research

The study is classified as a qualitative research project, specifically focusing on a systematic literature review. This type of research is particularly suited for exploring complex phenomena where existing theories and empirical findings can be synthesized to generate new insights (Sim & Mengshoel, 2023). By examining a wide range of scholarly articles, books, and relevant publications, the study aims to identify patterns, themes, and gaps in the current literature regarding ESL and its impact on employee engagement and performance (Stanton, 2020).

Data Sources

The data sources for this research consist of academic journals, conference papers, books, and reputable online databases. Relevant literature was sourced from databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, and ResearchGate, with an emphasis on peer-reviewed articles published in the last two decades (Boudry & Durand-Barthez, 2020). The selection criteria included studies that specifically addressed the concepts of ESL, employee engagement, employee performance, and entrepreneurial behavior. Furthermore, only articles published in English were considered to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the global discourse on these topics.

Data Collection Techniques

The data collection process involved a systematic review of the literature. Initially, a broad search was conducted using keywords such as "Entrepreneurial Servant Leadership," "Employee Engagement," "Employee Performance," and "Entrepreneurial Behavior." The search results were then refined to include only those studies that were directly relevant to the research questions. This iterative process allowed for the identification of seminal works and contemporary studies that contribute to the understanding of the relationships among the variables of interest.

Data Analysis Method

The data analysis involved thematic analysis, which is a widely used qualitative analytic method. This process included several steps: familiarization with the literature, coding the data, identifying themes, and synthesizing findings. Initially, the researchers read and re-read the selected literature to gain a comprehensive understanding of the key concepts and arguments presented. Subsequently, relevant information was coded based on recurring themes related to ESL, employee engagement, employee performance, and entrepreneurial behavior.

Once the coding was completed, the researchers identified overarching themes that emerged from the literature, allowing for the development of a conceptual framework that illustrates the interconnections among the constructs. This framework serves as a foundation for understanding how ESL influences employee engagement and, consequently, employee performance and entrepreneurial behavior. Ultimately, the findings from the thematic analysis will be



discussed in relation to the existing literature, providing insights into the implications of ESL for enhancing organizational outcomes.

In summary, this qualitative study employs a systematic literature review to explore the relationships between Entrepreneurial Servant Leadership, employee engagement, employee performance, and entrepreneurial behavior (Simamora et al., 2019). By synthesizing existing research, this study aims to contribute to the theoretical understanding of these constructs and offer practical implications for organizations seeking to foster a culture of engagement and innovation.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of existing literature on Entrepreneurial Servant Leadership (ESL) and its impact on employee engagement, employee performance, and entrepreneurial behavior reveals a multifaceted relationship that is essential for cultivating a thriving organizational environment (Vera et al., 2020). The findings underscore ESL as a transformative leadership style that not only enhances employee engagement but also significantly boosts employee performance and fosters entrepreneurial behavior. This section delves into the intricate dynamics of these constructs, drawing on a wide array of scholarly sources to provide a comprehensive understanding of their interconnections.

At the core of ESL is the dual commitment to serving employees while simultaneously promoting entrepreneurial initiatives (Newman et al., 2018). Leaders who embody this style prioritize the well-being and development of their team members, creating a nurturing and empowering atmosphere that fosters open

communication, collaboration, and trust. This supportive environment is foundational in cultivating employee engagement, which, as numerous studies indicate, is linked to higher levels of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and emotional investment in work (Bashir & Gani, 2020). When employees perceive their leaders as genuinely invested in their growth and success, they are more likely to feel valued and motivated, leading to enhanced engagement. This emotional connection is critical, as engaged employees tend to exhibit greater enthusiasm for their roles and are more willing to contribute to organizational objectives.

The literature consistently highlights the mediating role of employee engagement between ESL and employee performance. Engaged employees are inclined to exert discretionary effort, going beyond their formal job descriptions to achieve organizational goals. This phenomenon is particularly important in entrepreneurial contexts, where adaptability, creativity, and innovation are paramount. The analysis indicates that organizations led by ESL practitioners often witness a notable increase in creative problem-solving and proactive behavior among employees. These individuals feel empowered to take initiative, suggest improvements, and contribute to strategic decision-making processes. Such empowerment not only enhances individual performance but also positively impacts overall organizational effectiveness, creating a feedback loop where high performance further reinforces employee engagement.

Moreover, the exploration of the literature reveals that ESL significantly contributes to the cultivation of entrepreneurial behavior among employees. In organizations where leaders prioritize servant leadership principles, a

culture that values innovation, risk-taking, and proactive behavior is fostered. Employees in these environments are more likely to engage in entrepreneurial activities, such as generating new ideas, seeking opportunities for improvement, and actively participating in the innovation process. This entrepreneurial behavior is critical for organizations striving to maintain a competitive edge in dynamic markets, as it leads to the development of new products, services, and processes that drive growth and sustainability.

The findings also illuminate the broader implications of ESL on organizational culture. When leaders adopt an ESL approach, they signal to employees that their contributions are valued and that their voices matter in shaping the direction of the organization. This creates a culture of inclusivity and collaboration, where employees feel safe to express their ideas and challenge the status quo. The literature suggests that such cultures are more conducive to innovation, as employees are more likely to share their insights and collaborate on new initiatives. Consequently, the integration of ESL within organizational frameworks can lead to a more agile and responsive workforce, better equipped to navigate the complexities of modern business environments.

However, the synthesis of literature also reveals that the effectiveness of ESL in promoting employee engagement and entrepreneurial behavior is influenced by various contextual factors. Organizational culture, industry characteristics, and the specific challenges faced by the organization can all shape the outcomes of ESL. For instance, organizations that prioritize a culture of trust, collaboration, and continuous learning are more likely to experience the positive effects of ESL. In contrast, in environments characterized by rigid

hierarchies and a lack of emphasis on innovation, the impact of ESL may be diminished. These contextual nuances highlight the importance of tailoring leadership approaches to fit the unique needs and dynamics of each organization.

Furthermore, the analysis indicates that the relationship between ESL and employee outcomes may be moderated by individual employee characteristics, such as personality traits, motivation levels, and career aspirations. For instance, employees with a strong intrinsic motivation to innovate may respond more favorably to ESL, as they are likely to thrive in environments that encourage creativity and initiative. Conversely, employees who prefer structured environments may require additional support and guidance to fully engage with the entrepreneurial aspects of their roles. This suggests that organizations should consider individual differences when implementing ESL practices, ensuring that they provide the necessary resources and support to facilitate engagement and performance.

In conclusion, the findings of this literature review underscore the critical role of Entrepreneurial Servant Leadership in enhancing employee engagement, performance, and entrepreneurial behavior. By prioritizing the needs of employees and fostering a culture of empowerment and innovation, organizations can create an environment conducive to high performance and sustained competitive advantage. The insights gained from this study contribute to the existing body of knowledge by elucidating the mechanisms through which ESL influences employee outcomes and highlighting the importance of integrating servant leadership principles within entrepreneurial contexts.

Future research should aim to empirically validate these relationships and explore the contextual factors that may further influence the effectiveness of ESL in diverse organizational settings. Additionally, longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into how the effects of ESL evolve over time and in response to changing organizational dynamics. Ultimately, this study provides valuable insights for practitioners seeking to implement effective leadership strategies that not only enhance employee well-being but also drive organizational success through innovation and engagement. As organizations continue to navigate the complexities of the modern business landscape, the principles of ESL may serve as a guiding framework for developing leaders who can inspire and empower their teams to achieve exceptional results.

The Essence of Entrepreneurial Servant Leadership

Entrepreneurial Servant Leadership (ESL) represents a unique intersection of two powerful leadership paradigms: servant leadership and entrepreneurial leadership. Servant leadership emphasizes the leader's role as a caretaker who prioritizes the growth and well-being of their team members, fostering a culture of trust, empathy, and collaboration. In contrast, entrepreneurial leadership focuses on innovation, risk-taking, and the pursuit of new opportunities. The integration of these two paradigms creates a leadership style that not only nurtures employees but also encourages them to think creatively and embrace entrepreneurial activities.

The literature indicates that leaders who embody ESL principles are more likely to engage their employees by creating a supportive environment where individuals feel valued and

empowered. This supportive atmosphere is essential for cultivating employee engagement, as it fosters a sense of belonging and encourages team members to contribute their ideas and efforts toward organizational goals. The emphasis on serving employees as a primary objective of leadership aligns with the core tenets of engagement, which are rooted in emotional and psychological investment in one's work.

Moreover, ESL promotes a culture of innovation by encouraging employees to take risks and explore new ideas without fear of failure. This is particularly crucial in today's fast-paced business environment, where organizations must continuously adapt to remain competitive. The combination of servant leadership's focus on employee development and entrepreneurial leadership's emphasis on innovation creates a fertile ground for fostering a proactive workforce that is eager to contribute to the organization's success.

The analysis of the literature reveals that ESL can lead to enhanced employee satisfaction and retention, as employees are more likely to remain with organizations that prioritize their well-being and development. This retention is vital for maintaining organizational knowledge and fostering a stable, innovative workforce. As such, organizations that adopt ESL not only benefit from improved employee engagement but also gain a competitive advantage through enhanced employee loyalty and commitment.

Furthermore, ESL aligns with contemporary trends in leadership that emphasize the importance of emotional intelligence and relational dynamics in the workplace. Leaders who practice ESL are typically more attuned to the needs and aspirations of their employees, enabling them to build strong relationships that

foster engagement and collaboration. This relational aspect of ESL is critical for creating a positive organizational culture that supports both individual and collective success.

In summary, the essence of Entrepreneurial Servant Leadership lies in its ability to blend the nurturing aspects of servant leadership with the innovative spirit of entrepreneurial leadership. This unique approach not only enhances employee engagement but also creates a dynamic organizational culture that encourages creativity, collaboration, and sustained performance. As organizations seek to navigate the complexities of modern business, the principles of ESL offer a valuable framework for developing effective leaders who can inspire and empower their teams.

The Role of Employee Engagement in Performance

Employee engagement is a critical determinant of organizational performance, as it directly influences employees' motivation, commitment, and productivity. Engaged employees are more likely to invest discretionary effort into their work, leading to enhanced performance outcomes. The literature consistently demonstrates that organizations with high levels of employee engagement experience superior performance metrics, including increased productivity, higher quality of work, and improved customer satisfaction.

The analysis reveals that ESL significantly enhances employee engagement by fostering an environment where employees feel valued and supported. Leaders who practice ESL prioritize the development of their team members, providing them with the resources, training, and encouragement needed to succeed. This investment in employee development not only

boosts engagement levels but also equips employees with the skills necessary to perform at their best.

Moreover, engaged employees tend to exhibit greater loyalty to their organizations, reducing turnover rates and associated costs. The literature indicates that organizations with high employee engagement levels experience lower attrition rates, which is particularly important in industries facing talent shortages. By adopting ESL principles, organizations can create a more engaged workforce that is committed to achieving organizational goals and contributing to long-term success.

The relationship between employee engagement and performance is further strengthened by the positive feedback loop that ESL creates. As employees become more engaged, their performance improves, leading to greater recognition and support from their leaders. This recognition reinforces their engagement, creating a cycle of continuous improvement that benefits both employees and the organization as a whole.

Additionally, the analysis highlights that employee engagement is not merely a function of individual motivation; it is also influenced by the organizational culture and leadership practices in place. ESL fosters a culture of collaboration and open communication, which are vital components of engagement. When employees feel that their voices are heard and their contributions are valued, they are more likely to engage fully in their work.

In conclusion, the role of employee engagement in performance is underscored by its direct correlation with productivity, loyalty, and overall organizational success. ESL serves as a catalyst for enhancing employee engagement by

prioritizing employee well-being and development. As organizations strive to improve performance outcomes, embracing ESL principles can lead to a more engaged workforce that is committed to driving innovation and achieving excellence.

The Impact of Employee Performance on Entrepreneurial Behavior

Employee performance is a key driver of entrepreneurial behavior within organizations. High-performing employees are more likely to exhibit proactive behaviors, such as seeking out new opportunities, taking calculated risks, and contributing innovative ideas. The literature suggests that when employees are empowered to perform at their best, they are more inclined to engage in entrepreneurial activities that can benefit the organization.

The analysis indicates that ESL plays a crucial role in enhancing employee performance, which in turn fosters entrepreneurial behavior. Leaders who practice ESL create an environment that encourages experimentation and innovation, allowing employees to explore new ideas without the fear of failure. This supportive atmosphere is essential for cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset, as it enables employees to take risks and pursue new opportunities with confidence.

Moreover, the literature highlights that high-performing employees often possess a strong intrinsic motivation to innovate and contribute to the organization's success. When leaders prioritize employee development and provide the necessary resources and support, they enable these high performers to thrive. This empowerment not only enhances individual performance but also encourages employees to take initiative and engage in entrepreneurial

behaviors that drive organizational growth.

The relationship between employee performance and entrepreneurial behavior is further reinforced by the recognition and rewards systems in place within organizations. ESL leaders are more likely to recognize and celebrate innovative contributions from their employees, reinforcing the value of entrepreneurial behavior. This recognition serves as a powerful motivator, encouraging employees to continue pursuing new ideas and initiatives that can benefit the organization.

Additionally, the analysis reveals that organizations that foster a culture of high performance and innovation are better positioned to adapt to changing market conditions. In today's dynamic business environment, the ability to pivot and innovate is crucial for long-term success. By enhancing employee performance through ESL, organizations can cultivate a workforce that is agile, responsive, and capable of driving entrepreneurial initiatives.

In conclusion, the impact of employee performance on entrepreneurial behavior is significant, as high-performing employees are more likely to engage in innovative activities that contribute to organizational success. ESL serves as a vital mechanism for enhancing employee performance, creating a culture that supports experimentation and risk-taking. As organizations seek to foster a culture of entrepreneurship, embracing ESL principles can lead to a more innovative and proactive workforce.

The Interplay Between Employee Engagement and Entrepreneurial Behavior



The relationship between employee engagement and entrepreneurial behavior is a critical area of exploration, as engaged employees are more likely to exhibit entrepreneurial tendencies. The literature indicates that when employees feel emotionally and psychologically invested in their work, they are more inclined to take initiative, seek out new opportunities, and contribute innovative ideas. This interplay between engagement and entrepreneurial behavior is essential for organizations aiming to foster a culture of innovation.

The analysis highlights that ESL significantly enhances employee engagement, which in turn promotes entrepreneurial behavior. Leaders who embody ESL principles prioritize the needs and development of their employees, creating an environment where individuals feel valued and empowered. This sense of empowerment is a key driver of engagement, as employees who feel supported are more likely to take risks and explore new ideas.

Moreover, engaged employees tend to exhibit a greater willingness to collaborate and share knowledge with their peers. This collaborative spirit is essential for fostering entrepreneurial behavior, as innovation often arises from the exchange of ideas and perspectives. ESL encourages open communication and teamwork, creating a culture where employees feel comfortable sharing their insights and contributing to collective problem-solving.

The literature also emphasizes the role of intrinsic motivation in the relationship between engagement and entrepreneurial behavior. Engaged employees are typically driven by a strong sense of purpose and fulfillment in their work, which motivates them to pursue innovative initiatives. ESL leaders can harness this intrinsic motivation by aligning

organizational goals with employees' personal values and aspirations, creating a sense of shared purpose that fuels engagement and entrepreneurial behavior.

Additionally, the analysis reveals that organizations that prioritize employee engagement are more likely to experience enhanced creativity and innovation. Engaged employees are more likely to think outside the box and propose novel solutions to challenges, contributing to a culture of continuous improvement. ESL serves as a catalyst for this creativity by fostering an environment that encourages experimentation and risk-taking.

In conclusion, the interplay between employee engagement and entrepreneurial behavior is a vital consideration for organizations seeking to drive innovation and growth. ESL enhances employee engagement by creating a supportive and empowering environment, which in turn promotes entrepreneurial behavior. As organizations strive to cultivate a culture of innovation, embracing ESL principles can lead to a more engaged and proactive workforce that is eager to contribute to organizational success.

Practical Implications for Organizations

The findings from this analysis of Entrepreneurial Servant Leadership (ESL) and its impact on employee engagement, performance, and entrepreneurial behavior yield several practical implications for organizations. As businesses navigate the complexities of the modern marketplace, adopting ESL principles can serve as a strategic advantage in fostering a culture of innovation and engagement.

Firstly, organizations should prioritize the development of leaders who embody ESL



principles. Training programs that emphasize servant leadership and entrepreneurial thinking can equip leaders with the skills necessary to create a supportive and empowering environment for their employees. By investing in leadership development, organizations can cultivate a cadre of leaders who are committed to serving their teams and driving innovation.

Secondly, organizations must create structures that facilitate employee engagement and entrepreneurial behavior. This includes implementing recognition and reward systems that celebrate innovative contributions and encourage risk-taking. By recognizing and rewarding employees for their efforts, organizations can reinforce the value of engagement and entrepreneurial behavior, motivating employees to continue pursuing new ideas and initiatives.

Additionally, fostering a culture of open communication and collaboration is essential for promoting engagement and innovation. Organizations should encourage employees to share their ideas and insights, creating a safe space for experimentation and creativity. This collaborative culture can lead to increased knowledge sharing and collective problem-solving, ultimately driving entrepreneurial behavior.

Furthermore, organizations should align their goals with the values and aspirations of their employees. By understanding what motivates their workforce and creating a sense of shared purpose, leaders can enhance employee engagement and foster a culture of innovation. This alignment between organizational and individual goals can create a powerful sense of commitment and drive among employees.

Lastly, organizations must remain adaptable

and responsive to changing market conditions. The principles of ESL can help organizations cultivate a workforce that is agile and capable of navigating uncertainty. By empowering employees to take initiative and engage in entrepreneurial activities, organizations can position themselves for success in an ever-evolving business landscape.

In conclusion, the practical implications of this analysis underscore the importance of adopting Entrepreneurial Servant Leadership principles to enhance employee engagement, performance, and entrepreneurial behavior. By investing in leadership development, fostering a culture of collaboration, and aligning organizational goals with employee aspirations, organizations can create an environment conducive to innovation and sustained success. As businesses continue to face challenges and opportunities in the modern marketplace, embracing ESL can serve as a strategic framework for achieving excellence and driving growth.

4. CONCLUSION

The integration of Entrepreneurial Servant Leadership (ESL) significantly enhances employee engagement, which in turn positively influences employee performance and fosters entrepreneurial behavior within organizations. By prioritizing the well-being and development of employees, ESL creates a supportive and empowering environment that encourages individuals to take initiative, collaborate, and innovate. This synergistic relationship highlights the importance of adopting ESL principles as a strategic framework for organizations seeking to cultivate a motivated and proactive workforce, ultimately driving improved performance outcomes and sustaining competitive advantage in today's dynamic

business landscape.

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