THE IMPACT OF ASSERTIVENESS AMONG SCHOOL LEADERS AT WORK: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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Abstract : Assertiveness means expressing your point of view clearly and direct, while still respecting others. Communicating in an assertive manner can help you to: minimize conflict, control anger. Because assertiveness is based on mutual respect, it's an effective and diplomatic communication style. Being assertive shows that you respect yourself because you're willing to stand up for your interests and express your thoughts and feelings. It also demonstrates that you're aware of others' rights and willing to work on resolving conflicts. The purpose of this paper is for the consideration of the impact of assertiveness at work among school leaders, this systematic review paper is to identify the literatures evidence and research related to the impact of assertiveness at work among school leaders, the benefits of being assertive communication at work. Thus, this paper reports the findings from the systematic review of the impact of assertive communication at work among school leaders. assertiveness, especially in challenging environments like institutions such as schools, has many benefits, as it impacted school leaders including the following increases their self-confidence, self-love, and self-respect. It also increases the effectiveness of their communication during conflict or confrontation and earned respect from their peers or subordinates. Being assertive enables you to communicate skillfully in challenging situations and with difficult people. This is particularly important when you find saying "no" impossible. The "yes" syndrome can be damaging for you and your colleagues. Sometimes it is okay, and even necessary, to say: "This is enough." "There are only so many hours in the day, and only so much work I can do." And "it is not a sign of weakness or being incapable." Otherwise, there is a risk of burnout, poor productivity, and poor relationships. Making the most of assertiveness, when being assertive, try to: Spend time communicating and connecting with people; Provide good, honest feedback, helpfully and fairly; Use moral judgment in decision making; Be ready for change; Maintain excellent relationships; Find opportunities to collaborate; An assertive leader can be highly successful for both themselves and those they Assertive leadership can then make a confident decision about how to move forward. Other members of the organization may feel more appreciated because their opinions played a role in the decision-making lead.

Keywords: **Assertiveness, communication styles, assertive communication, assertive leadership, school leaders**

INTRODUCTION

School leadership refers to the processes, decisions, actions school leaders take to ensure a school achieves its goals. It involves setting direction, creating a culture of learning, managing staff, ensuring the school is well-resourced and that students are advancing. School leaders include headteachers, deputy heads, heads of year, department heads, school administrators and special educational needs coordinators. School leaders are an integral part of education. Their work defines the school's vision, which in turn impacts student achievement. It's their responsibility to ensure that their school is providing the best possible environment in which educators can guide students to reach their potential. Despite their various roles and individual expertise and talents, successful school leaders share many of the same characteristics and skills (https://uk.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/school-leadership).

Some researchers have sustained that there are strong relations between personality and communication styles (Leung & Bond, 2001; Weaver,2005), some articles demonstrate that assertive communication style can be learned (Lewittes & Bem, 1983; Lin et al., 2004; Tavakoli et al., 2009). Aiming at this purpose, it is necessary to explain the characteristics of the Heffner (1997) communication styles: aggressive, passive, and assertive (Kolb & Griffith, 2009).

Communication styles

An aggressive communication style applies force physically or symbolically, in order, minimally, to dominate and perhaps damage or, maximally, to defeat and perhaps destroy the locus of attack" (Infante, 1987, p. 158). This style is characterized by a monopolizing attitude, which demonstrates powerful behavior (Heffner, 1997). People with an aggressive communication style disrespect or ignore the other individuals' rights (Kolb & Griffith, 2009).

A passive communication style is adopted by fearful individuals who have the tendency to block their feelings in confrontation with different problems in different situations (Bennis & Nanus, 1985).

Assertive Communication

An assertive communication style enables individuals to express ideas or opinions in a direct manner (Dasgupta, Suar & Singh, 2012), help people to sustain affirmation without need of proof, and to express their feelings, rights, and thoughts without attacking the rights, feelings, and thoughts of other people (Sims, 2017; Freeman & Adams 1999; Rakos, 1991). This kind of communication style helps individuals to know that they have the right to refuse unreasonable requests (Beatty,Plax & Kearney, 1984), by saying „NO" to peers requests (Kolb & Griffith, 2009).They are not indifferent to the feelings of their communication partners and this is why they carefully utter both demands and complains in a polite but firm way. Assertiveness is a style of communicating and a competence that can be learned and acquired in different life's stages individuals to express ideas or opinions in a direct manner (Dasgupta, Suar & Singh, 2012), help people to sustain affirmation without need of proof, and to express their feelings, rights, and thoughts without attacking the rights, feelings and thoughts of other people (Sims, 2017;Freeman & Adams 1999; Rakos, 1991). This kind of communication style helps individuals to know that they have the right to refuse unreasonable requests (Beatty,Plax & Kearney, 1984), by saying „NO" to peers requests (Kolb & Griffith, 2009).They are not indifferent to the feelings of their communication partners and this is why they carefully utter both demands and complains in a polite but firm way. Assertiveness is a style of communicating and a competence that can be learned and acquired in different life's stages. Assertive people are self-controlled about their behaviors (Garner, 2012), and are good communicators (Benton, 1999). People with a high level of assertiveness are more self-actualized (Lange & Jakubowski, 1976), are more confident about their opinions (Alberti & Emmons, 1970; 1974), and more confident about their ability to interact with other individuals (Masters & Burish,1987). Instead, non-assertive individuals are described to be shy, self-depreciating and apologetic (Sims, 2017). From a gender perspective, Costa, Terracciano &McCrae (2001) sustain that men are more assertive than women are. From a cultural perspective, women with low level of assertiveness are liked more than women with a high level of assertiveness (Amanatullah & Morris, 2010). Assertiveness is strongly influenced by our personality traits, especially by Extraversion (Sims,2017) and Neuroticism (Bratko et al., 2002). Assertive communication doesn't guarantee that you will get what you want or that the other person will understand your concerns or be happy with what you said. It does improve the chances that the other person will understand what you want or how you feel and thus improve your chances of communicating effectively. Four essential steps to assertive communication (Hunter, Goodie, et.al., 2009). 1.) Tell the person what you think about their behavior without accusing them; 2. Tell them how you feel when they behave a certain way; 3.) Tell them how their behavior affects you and your relationship with them.; and 4.) Tell them what you would prefer them to do instead.

Assertive leadership

Assertive leadership is a communication style in which people express their thoughts, ideas and expectations with their teams in a self-assured, considerate way. This type of leadership involves collaboration with people at all levels of the organization. For instance, when trying to find a solution to an issue within their department, an assertive leader may reach out to their team to ask for their feedback. Assertive leadership can then make a confident decision about how to move forward. Other members of the organization may feel more appreciated because their opinions played a role in the decision making. An assertive management style offers many benefits for leaders and their organizations. Assertiveness can be a very effective approach to management because leaders earn the appreciation of others by supporting their teams. People who feel valued by their supervisors are more likely to respect their authority(https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/assertive-leadership).

According to Maxwell (2007), a leader cannot move people to action until the leader first moves them with emotion. The stronger the relationship and connection between leader and follower, the more likely the follower is to willingly engage with the leader (Maxwell, 2007). This proposed theory of assertive servant leadership provides a new lens in which to view servant leadership through a combination of various leadership theories to include the Leader-Member Exchange Theory (Graen & Cashman, 1975; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), the Situational Leadership Theory (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977), the Managerial Grid developed by Blake and Moulton (1964), and work completed by Cornelius (2013) regarding leadership styles that can be molded to develop a positive leader-follower relationship, yet provides a stand-alone concept of assertive servant leadership that is in direct contrast to traditional leadership theories. The proposed servant leadership model introduces a concept of assertiveness where the leader asserts him- or herself into the lives of the follower, dependent upon the followers' needs and level of ability and willingness to complete tasks, to develop trusted leader-follower.

In the workplace environment, emotions are often evoked by events that occur between leaders and followers and these emotions often mediate the relationships between events, leaders, and followers (Weiss & Cropanzano,1996). For example, when a follower is publicly chastised by their leader or talked to in a condescending way, the follower is likely to evoke negative emotions such as anger and/or anxiety (Fox & Stalworth, 2010), which may in-turn negatively influence follower attitudes such as job satisfaction, and ultimately instill internal pressures that affect behaviors such as leader-follower engagement. Negative pressure can result in followers experiencing negative emotions that can lead to resentment of their leaders. According to Fox and Stalworth (2010), there is nothing else that so kills the ambitions of a person than unconstructive criticism. On the other hand, positive emotional engagement and support from the leader can increase follower job satisfaction, ultimately relieving internal pressures while reducing stress levels of followers (Carnegie, 1981). Provided this information, regarding how leader follower interactions and subsequent personal emotions can negatively or positively affect the leader-follower relationship, after reading this article one should be able to relate the importance of this proposed assertive servant leadership model to developing effective leader-follower relationships.

STUDY PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

Taking into consideration of the impact of assertiveness at work among school leaders, this systematic review paper is to identify the literatures evidence and research related to the impact of assertiveness at work among school leaders, the benefits of being assertive communication at work.

Literature Review
Influence

Personal influence is the ability to influence the character development, or behavior. of someone or something, and leaders must understand this fundamental principle to be effective with their followers (Yukl, 2013). As previously alluded to, followers can be influenced in one of two ways: through mandate/positional leadership or socio-emotional/servant leadership (Drath, 2001). Mandate/positional leadership forces others to do something based on individual position within the organization. On the other hand, socio-emotional/servant leadership focuses less on the position of authority and more on the level of trust, commitment, and loyalty between the leader and follower. To earn a position of socio-emotional/servant leadership a leader should understand their followers; know their stories, appreciate followers as individuals, and tailor levels of leader-follower interactions based on individual uniqueness (Dang & Basur, 2017; Drath, 2001). For a leader to fully live these concepts he or she should assert him- or herself into the lives of their followers. To better understand this act of assertiveness, or the quality of being involved without being overly aggressive, one can compare the needs of a leader follower relationship to the art of fishing, and the fisherman-fish relationship (Morgan, 2006). When the leader works to determine a method for engaging with followers, they should consider what the follower needs, much like a fisherman should consider what a fish needs when determining how to catch a fish. Although the fisherman might prefer strawberries and cream, it is highly unlikely that same delight would appeal to the fish. In the same custom, the leader should think about what the follower wants and/or needs and serve the follower in a manner that allows for both to focus on accomplishing goals (Morgan, 2006). It is in this regard a leader might use this proposed assertive servant leadership model to help he or she determine the appropriate relationship, or level of assertiveness, required to positively interact with the follower to ensure both personal and organizational goals are accomplished. The secret to this success lies in the ability to acquire the follower's point of view, and to see things from the follower's angle, as well as from the leader's angle (Carnegie, 1981). When a leader takes the time to assert him- or herself with their followers, to connect with them emotionally, show their appreciation, and lead his or her followers with servant leadership, they increase their chances of earning follower buy-in, increasing production, increasing retention, while instigating followers to seek advice and guidance from their leaders (Smith, 2016). Carnegie (1981) posited that one of the deepest principles of human nature is the craving to feel appreciated, and what better way for a follower to feel appreciated than to have the leader assert him- or herself into the followers' life, while displaying genuine care and concern for follower wellbeing. Traditional approaches to leadership might drive one to believe this style of leadership is overly soft and has no place in our contemporary work environment, however; empirical analysis is clear: higher employee productivity, the greater buy-in of followers, enhanced solutions, increased follower commitment, and an overall healthier work environment (Patterson, 2003; Smith, 2016). Maxwell (2007) declared that leaders who genuinely assert themselves into the lives of their followers over a sustained period of time can make a positive impact beyond themselves. To accomplish this, one must not only comprehend the concept of assertiveness in regards to developing and maturing a positive leader-follower relationship, one must also know how to apply assertiveness in regards to this relationship building, hence; the relevance of this proposed assertive servant leadership model.

Assertiveness

Assertiveness has been viewed as a dimension describing people's tendency to speak up for, defend, and act in the interest of themselves, their values, preferences, and goals (Wilson & Gallois, 1993). Assertive behaviors can be both proactive (vocalizing needs) and reactive (guarding against annoyance), both verbal (articulating clear objectives) and nonverbal (displaying dissatisfaction), and both local or immediate (faceto-face) and diffuse or prolonged (influence diplomacies over time) (Wilson & Gallois,1993). Throughout time, work on leadership perceptions has underscored the importance of assertiveness (Gough, 1990), however; regardless of leadership style, the act of leadership involves some level of assertiveness on the part of the leader when engaging with the follower (Northouse, 2004). According to House, Javidan, Hanges, and Dorfman (2011), assertiveness relates to the level leaders assert themselves into relationships with

followers, getting to know and understand the needs and desires of followers, and is an essential characteristic of leadership. To completely comprehend the significance of assertiveness in the leader follower relationship one must first understand that assertiveness is not always considered an all-out aggressive behavior toward others. Cornelius (2013) announced there are various levels of assertiveness a person can use to engage with others. Applying those assertiveness levels to the leader-follower relationship I decree those levels as: submissive, low-assertive, mid-assertive, and high-assertive. Since not all people react the same to personal engagement, due to various levels of trust and the maturity levels of individual relationships, leaders should vary their levels of assertiveness when engaging with their followers. Cornelius (2013), believed that a person who skillfully regulates his or her levels of assertiveness, to connect with others in a productive way, greatly increases his or her chances of developing a positive relationship. In regard to the leader-follower relationship, this equates to a leader asserting him- or herself into the lives of followers to develop a positive and productive relationship, in-turn enabling the leader to achieve buy-in from followers and attaining their willing participation.

Research has confirmed that when leaders connect with followers through use of the appropriate assertiveness level, followers are more likely to respond in a positive manner (Christman, 2007). When individuals are connected to and respected by others, they are more likely to willing respond with openness and honesty (Cornelius, 2013). In terms of the leader-follower relationship, when the follower feels connected to and respected by the leader the follower is more willing to respond in an open and honest manner, and in-turn, the leader feels less pressure to have to engage through use of his or her positional authority. The significance of connectedness, linked to the emotional feelings of importance, cannot be overstated. It was this desire for an emotional connection with others, and the assertiveness of one important person, that led an uneducated, poverty-stricken Abraham Lincoln to greatness (Carnegie, 1981). In our contemporary world, it is quite possible this proposed assertive servant leadership model can provide the tool required to assist leaders in asserting him- or herself with followers, in-turn helping followers feel an emotional connection/comfortable with the leader follower relationship while instigating feelings of individual importance, and developing appropriate positive relationships required to meet both personal and organizational goals.

Assertive Servant Leadership Model

According to Yung and Tsai (2013), in many contemporary successful organizations, great leaders are asserting themselves into the lives of their followers, creatively serving their followers, and creating environments in which leaders and followers work

together to passionately accomplish remarkable things; take for example Southwest Airlines. Herb Kelleher, a previous leader of Southwest Airlines, made it a ritual to assert himself into the lives of his followers, and served his followers in a manner like few others (Hackman & Johnson, 2013). Herb Kelleher went beyond the traditional leader open-door concept, asserted himself with his followers in their work environments, and became what his followers were, to earn their trust and respect. For example; he asserted himself into the lives of ticket agents in their work environment and took on the task of issuing tickets to passengers, just as his ticket agents did; and he asserted himself with baggage handlers in their work environment and moved baggage, just like his baggage handlers did (Hackman & Johnson, 2013). In essence, through his assertive servant leadership behaviors he earned the trust and respect of his followers, and created an organizational circle of safety (Sinek, 2014). Service-oriented organizations, led by assertive servant leaders, such as military units or first-responder organizations, are able to develop circles of safety and are able to trust each other so deeply they will literally put their lives on the line for each other (Sinek, 2014). This organizational principle has been alive since the earliest days of mankind, when survival was predominantly dependent upon reliance on others, and is alive and well in contemporary organizations (Ascol, 2005). Sinek (2014) proclaimed that as with the first-century world, our contemporary world is full of distrust, fear, and individuals motivated by self-interest, however; the best organizations foster trust and cooperation because their leaders assert themselves with their followers, serve the need servant Leadership Model of their followers, and build a circle of safety that separates the security inside the team from the challenges outside. According to Hicks (2003), it is this type of adaptive, confident, workplace environment that provides members with a sense of belonging, where employees feel they can live their vocation, and where organizational member energies are devoted to facing obstacles and seizing opportunities (Hicks, 2003).

In this type of organizational environment, leaders are charged with asserting themselves with their followers, and with developing empathy while injecting that empathy into their organizations through unconditional trust, respect, and acceptance (Sinek, 2014). Choosing to see followers as humans, rather than machines used to complete tasks (Weber, 1947), contemporary servant leaders can assert leadership characteristics that assist them with knowing their followers, enable them to honor people for who they are in order to earn their trust, respect, and acceptance (Hicks, 2003; Upshur-Myles, 2008), and to develop a circle of trust (Sinek, 2014). Through an understanding of the complexity of the times; where individuals are torn between their beliefs, and do not know who or what to trust and/or who to follow, leaders can learn to serve and protect their followers in a manner that eliminates jealousies that have the potential to shatter traditional organizational cultures (Upshur-Myles, 2008), while accepting all for who they are and what they bring to the organization (Hicks, 2003). According to Sinek (2014), when people believe they have to protect themselves from others within the organization, individuals and organizations suffer. When people trust and cooperate with each other they thrive internally, they pull together, and the culture and/or organization grow stronger (Sinek, 2014). When certain conditions are met, and people inside an organization feel safe among each other, they tend to work together to achieve things none of them could achieve independently. When leaders assert themselves into the lives of their followers and serve their follower's needs, followers tend to trust their leaders and co-workers more and do a better job for their leader, their teammates, and the organization, in order to maintain that trust (Sinek, 2014).

Assertive servant leadership is about serving, cultivating and harvesting a flock of committed and devoted organizational members, who are willing to place the needs of others before their personal needs and desires, and to promote a community of trust and respect (Lett, 2014). To gain a better understanding of these assertive servant leadership principles, leaders can exhume strategic and tactical assertive servant leadership strategies, and learn how to apply diverse levels of assertive connectedness and servant leadership, rather than relying on his or her positional authority, to earn the trust, respect, and acceptance of followers. Leadership literature provides a treasure trove of leadership knowledge, especially regarding assertive servant-based strategic and tactical decision making methods, for use by contemporary organizational leaders (Upshur-Myles, 2008), however; one must understand how to apply these principles in a positive, assertive manner.

Contemporary servant leaders can learn to move people with emotion while inspiring individuals to willingly take action (Maxwell, 2007). Servant leaders can learn to assert themselves with their followers, and to give him- or herself to others, in-turn inspiring others to give back (Ascol, 2005). "Leaders commit themselves to people and activities that provide explosive growth" (Maxwell, 1999, p. 340). Burns (1978) declared that contemporary servant leaders could learn to meet the needs of their followers and their organizations, while keeping his or her mission in the forefront of their minds. Servant leaders can learn to personalize his or her teaching and mentorship style through examples provided by servant leaders throughout history (Ascol, 2005). Cornelius (2013) believed that contemporary leaders can learn to apply various levels of assertiveness to connect with their followers.

I openly suggest leaders apply various levels of assertiveness in the following fashion: submissive-assertiveness when followers just need a sounding board/need to vent, low-assertiveness when followers need encouragement, mid-assertiveness when followers need someone to motivate them, and high-assertiveness to direct followers. Expanding upon leader-follower concepts developed by Blake & Mouton (1964), Cornelius (2013), Graen & Cashman (1975), Graen & Uhl-Bien (1995), and Hersey & Blanchard (1977), I developed this proposed model of assertive servant leadership in an effort to provide a tool for leaders in assessing their levels of assertiveness, while developing leader-follower relationships. Contemporary leaders can learn assertive servant leadership skills, to thrust aside their positional authority, and to rely on their ability to earn the trust, respect, and acceptance of followers for the advancement of the mission. Contemporary leaders can learn to apply various levels of assertiveness to their practice of assertive servant leadership to help them remain flexible while assessing each follower and group encounter on an individual basis. As a result of exceptional situational awareness (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977), and application of respectful pluralism (Hicks, 2003), contemporary servant leaders can gain a greater understanding of the criticality of asserting themselves with followers to develop and mature relationships required to complete their organizational missions (Christman, 2007; Yukl, 2013).

This assertive servant leadership model; assumes that each follower is able and confident, focuses on the fit of the servant leader to the needs of the follower, and assumes the servant leader empowers the follower. Similar to the Leader-Member Exchange Theory (Graen & Cashman, 1975; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), the Situational Leadership Theory (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977), and the work conducted by Blake and Moulton (1964) and Cornelius (2013), and in contrast to traditional leadership theories, this assertive servant leadership model requires the leader to assert him- or herself into the lives of the follower, dependent upon the followers needs and level of ability and willingness to complete the task, to develop trusted relationships. Willingness of the

follower, in this sense, is largely based on two major factors; the relationship between the leader and the follower, and the followers confidence in the leader. As previously emphasized, this proposed assertive servant leadership model ties together work completed by Blake & Mouton (1964), Cornelius (2013), Graen & Cashman (1975), Graen & Uhl-Bien (1995), and Hersey & Blanchard (1977), yet stands on its own. In some respects this proposed assertive servant leadership model is very similar to Blake and Mouton's (1964) managerial grid, sometimes called leadership grid, which depicts two dimensions of leader behavior, concern for people (accommodating people's needs and giving them priority), and concern for production (keeping tight schedules) with each dimension ranging from low (1) to high (9), thus creating 81 different positions in which the leader's style might fall. However, this proposed model provides four dimensions of assertive servant leadership behaviors. As with the managerial grid, or leadership grid, this proposed assertive servant leadership model can be used to help managers analyze their own assertive servant leadership behaviors through a technique known as grid training. Whereas the managerial grid is aimed at assisting leaders to reach the ideal state of high concern for people and production, this proposed assertive servant leadership model can assists leaders with identifying the levels of assertiveness required with their followers based on the respective leader-follower relationship.

Previous studies on Assertiveness

As regard to the impacts of assertiveness on personality of individuals, Moon (2009) stated that assertive behavior resulted in different personalities such as aggressive behavior; aggression involves standing up for you in a way that is pushy push and inappropriate. Aggression offends the rights of other people. Therefore, people who have an aggressive style believe firmly in their own rights but may not believe that others have equal right. These usually have a strong need to complete or prove themselves. They sometimes feel deserve more respect and attention than other peoples do. Alternatively, although people with aggressive style may agree that other people have rights, but lose sight of this when they feel their own rights have been infringed upon. People who have an aggressive style tend to have poor communication skills. They usually get their own way by treading on others by being rude, pushy and insulting. This behavior may not be intentional but can be very hurtful. They are likely to have trouble developing or keeping close and affectionate relationship. Aggressive behavior includes physical and verbal attacks, threats, and insults. The other is passive behavior; a person with a passive style tends to put the need of others before their own. This maybe because they do not believe they have the right to assert themselves. They may believe that they are inferior and that their needs are not important enough to make a fuss about, alternatively, passive people could feel that it is too difficult to be assertive or that bit is much easier to late others make all the decisions. These people tend to believe that they are in competent or weak and thus have difficulty looking after them or making their own decision.

Although passive people may not always be happy with the decisions made by others, it usually seems easier to go along with the decisions and keep the peace rather than make a fuss. However, given time passive people may start to resent the fact that their needs are always overlooked. The result may be low self-esteem, depression, anger, and many other emotional or physical complaints. Also, people who are very passive often lose the respect of others if they fail to stand up for their rights.

Regarding the relationship between academic achievement and assertiveness, Moon (2009) stated that assertive students achieve more in their academic performance at secondary school. Since they have expressed their feelings, opinions, thoughts freely at the other extreme, students have displayed passive behavior in capable of expressing their thoughts and feelings to others. If they do so, they are self-defeating and behave with a lack of confidence. This causes them to be ignored by others, which, as a result, decreases their self-esteem. Compared to assertive person, an unassertive person shows a lack of self-respect, also displays some lack of confidence in others capacity to deal with frustration, responsibility, etc. Ultimately, they hope to appease others and avoid conflict which finally hamper their day to day lives in general and academic life in particular.

As pertaining to the importance of being assertiveness Jakubowski (1976, as cited in Moon, 2009) argued that assertive behavior is commonly associated with the ability to initiate and maintain reward interpersonal relationship in the business world and personal life. He also further stated that people high in assertiveness are more self-actualized than people low in assertiveness because assertive behavior leads to one's needs being respected and fulfilled, are communicative, free-spirited, secure, self-assured, and able to influence and guide others.

DISCUSSION

The above cited literatures have proven that assertiveness, especially in challenging environments like institutions such as schools, has many benefits, as it impacted school leaders including the following: increases their self-confidence, self-love, and self-respect. It also increases the effectiveness of their communication during conflict or confrontation and earned respect from their peers or subordinates. Being assertive enables you to communicate skillfully in challenging situations and with difficult people. This is particularly important when you find saying "no" impossible. The "yes" syndrome can be damaging for you and your colleagues. Sometimes it is okay, and even necessary, to say: "This is enough." "There are only so many hours in the day, and only so much work I can do." And "it is not a sign of weakness or being incapable." Otherwise, there is a risk of burnout, poor productivity, and poor relationships. Letting people know how you feel and what you need provides the opportunity for them to recognize your needs and adjust how they act (Banks, 2020).

The challenge, as in all areas of our life, is balance. There is a happy medium between being too passive – risking being walked over and ignored – and overly aggressive – damaging relationships and appearing unprofessional. Skilled assertiveness can be the difference between achieving or failing to be successful in the workplace by school leaders.

Managers who rated highest as leaders used assertiveness alongside other valuable skills (Folkman, 2013). Making the most of assertiveness, when being assertive, try to: Spend time communicating and connecting with people; Provide good, honest feedback, helpfully and fairly; Use moral judgment in decision making; Be ready for change; Maintain excellent relationships; Find opportunities to collaborate; An assertive leader can be highly successful for both themselves and those they lead.

CONCLUSION

Assertive servant leadership is about serving, cultivating and harvesting a flock of committed and devoted organizational members, who are willing to place the needs of others before their personal needs and desires, and to promote a community of trust and

respect. Assertive leaders. involves collaboration with people at all levels of the organization. For instance, when trying to find a solution to an issue within their department, an assertive leader may reach out to their team to ask for their feedback. Assertive leadership can then make a confident decision about how to move forward. Other members of the organization may feel more appreciated because their opinions played a role in the decision making.

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