# COMPARING SERVANT LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT OF HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN PUNJAB, PAKISTAN

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**ABSTRACT:** *This study focused on comparing servant leadership and organizational commitment of higher secondary school principals in province Punjab, Pakistan.  It was a descriptive study and survey method was used for the purpose of data collection. Using the simple random sample technique, 105 principals of public higher secondary schools, (including 54 male principals and 51 female principals, 62 rural schools and 43 urban schools) were selected. Servant Leadership Scale (SLS) was adapted while Organizational Commitment Scale (OCS) was adopted. The data were collected through personal visits and mail. Data were analyzed by applying Pearson r and t-test for independent samples. The study found a strong positive relationship between servant leadership and organizational commitment. Male principals significantly demonstrated higher levels of servant leadership and organizational commitment than female principals. However, no significant differences were found between rural and urban school principals' perceptions of  using servant leadership and organizational commitment.*

**KEY TERMS:** Servant Leadership, Organizational Commitment, Empowering, emotional healing, loyal

## INTRODUCTION

Servant leadership is a concept in stressing that leadership is about serving the community, not exercising power and enjoying freedom of service.  Greenleaf [1] stated that "the servant-leader is servant first …It begins one to aspire feeling the one wants to serve, to serve first" (p.27). Servant leadership is a way of social deal between leaders and employees that occupy production based contact [2]. Servant leadership holds the employees and their work for the betterment of an organization. The research found various dimensions such as *listening, empathy, healing (emotional healings), helping followers or subordinates, putting subordinates very first, Awareness, Persuasion, Conceptualization (conceptual skills), behaving ethically, stewardship, foresight, building the community,* and *commitment to the growth of the individuals* constitute servant leadership [3,4].

The term servant leadership was depended on the idea that revealed if servant considered as a leader [1]. Spears [4] stated that Greenleaf developed this term after studying a literature subjected as a journey on the East.  He further stated that Leo as a polite and humble servant got on a spiritual journey with a group of people. Meanwhile, Leo disappeared or moved aside. The act of Leo twisted uncertainty and lack of direction. The trip had to be cast off by missing the leadership of their servant leader.  After the enquiry it was exposed that Leo was not present as a servant, but leader to differ the simple community. As per the understandings of Greenleaf, Leo was a transformed typed leader. Greenleaf also recommended that a true leader always willing to help others and to be a servant first.  A leader with an idea to serve would make him a great leader [1]. The servant leaders provided a safe way to others through his presence.  While on the other hand, it would be understood that the only authority that he takes that is helping others to lead.  In this sense servant leader is capable of helping his own employees.  Servant leader sited those awareness, employees prior to concern of the leader, highlighted individual development and empowerment of the followers [1].

In servant leadership the primary plan and idea was not noticed as power. Several components of servant leadership were insisted the term power sharing. In other words, the basic tasks of servant leader were people and relationships. Phenomenon of servant leadership included service for others, listening as a declaration, trust to be created and beneficial employers. Servant leader is not finding the self benefits, but he tried to promote the skills of followers and encouraged them to develop and become a part of leadership. Organizational commitment, the second variable of the study, is a person's psychological attachment to the organization. Work variables predicted by organizational commitment such as job performance, turnover, and organizational citizenship behavior. The basic features of organizational commitment are considered as empowerment, employability, job insecurity, role stress and distributional identification [5].

On these measures of commitment, Meyer and Allen [5] introduced a three component model of organizational commitment, namely as affective, continuance and normative commitment.  This model provided a sense regarding emotional attachment of an organization, the requirement of profit or loss and employee's commitment and remains with the organization as a feeling of responsibilities, respectively.

Organizational commitment considered as predictor to achieve the goals [6]. The workers who are dedicated to their institutes have less wished to leave and the vice versa [7], 6]. The employees displeased within the organizational atmosphere demonstrate less commitment and become sensitively or emotionally quiet from the organization [8].  In the most circumstances, when the leader deliberately takes care for the employees, the commitment level of employees is ultimately increased. Similarly, in this sense the growth of employees or staff members would take place [9].

Many researchers conducted studies to find out the relationship between servant leadership and organizational commitment [10,11,12,13,14].  Limited researches have studied which found the relationship between servant leadership and workplace attitude. Presently, no study revealed the relationship between servant leadership and organizational commitment of principals of higher secondary

school in Punjab, Pakistani prospective. As, this study was an effort to find the connection bwtween servant leadership and organizational commitment of higher secondary school principals in Punjab. The present study examined how principals of higher secondary schools differ in their perceptions of servant leadership and organizational commitment.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the relationship between servant leadership and organizational commitment (overall & factor wise)?
2. Do male and female principals of higher secondary schools differ on their perceptions of servant leadership and organizational commitment?
3. Do principals of higher secondary schools differ on their perceptions of servant leadership and organizational commitment based on their schools location (rural and urban)?

### Servant Leadership

Servant leadership looked like to score from corner to corner against leadership theories while giving an initiative to the theories showing the principles connecting with the growth and development of an individual. Servant leadership is giving a view in deep sense on the individual personality [15]. Lubin [16] stated servant leadership provides a clear picture to understand the concept of leadership. Servant leadership is associated with the general health and growth of an individual and provide a theme that how organizational goals can be achieved. Furthermore, servant leadership provides a way to achieve the organizational objectives [17]. Lubin [16] defined that servant leadership provides a comprehensive guideline for benefits of the leader. Servant leadership forces the values and progress of followers as well as people of the community and building of the community, the performance of genuineness by giving a way of leadership for those being led and the giving out the authority for the betterment of each individual and the organization as well [18].

The servant requires an insight on employees. Northouse [19] stated that community task with equal level to the stakeholders in an organization would complete through servant. Fundamentally, this of leadership is focused to serve others for development and achieving tasks and goals [20]. Servant leader serves for the betterment of the organization and well being of the followers. The servant leaders on accepting their authority, decided to use it to serve for the best benefits of employers.

As Greenleaf [1] early admired, numerous writers have tried to describe and re-describe the characteristics of servant leadership. It was claimed by Graham [21] as servant leadership is an ethical form of charismatic leadership and tensed the inspiring or moral scope. Graham [21] noticed that this type of leadership carried elements such as autonomy, relational power and moral development of employees and humility. The capacity for the relationship building, self identity and concern with future are basic topics of servant leadership. Spears [4] demonstrated the basic aspects of servant leadership such as sympathy, healing, listening and community building. Another two factors, trust and individual potency, were introduced by Northouse [19].

Farling, Stone, and Winston [22] recommended five factors of servant leadership such as influence, vision, trust, credibility and service. Russell [23] added credibility, vision, influence, trust, pioneering, modeling, service, appreciate to others and empowering. An eleven characteristics model was also stated by Barbuto and Wheeler [24] by adding calling to Spears' model on servant leadership. Nine attributes on servant leadership such as honesty, integrity, trust, vision, modeling, service, pioneering, appreciating others and empowering others was also produced [25]. Further, Russell and Stone [25] also furnished eleven attributes or characteristics such as credibility, communication, stewardship, visibility, competence, persuasion, listening, influence, teaching, delegation and encouragement.

Servant leader's love on the employers tune was demonstrated by Winston [26]. He stated that commitment and self efficacy resulted in the motivation of employers. This would lead to unselfish attitude with respect to the leader. To find the major results and achieve the standard goals the leader should be capable of serving followers. Servant leadership explained two areas as individual level and organizational level [16]. Drury [10] and Irving [27] stated that presently, organizational leadership assessment (OLA) is the central assessment tool.

Barbuto and Wheeler [24] formed a set of five characteristics of servant leadership such as emotional healing, wisdom, persuasive mapping, altruistic calling and stewardship. This model was formed by testing by Greenleaf's [1] eleven element model of servant leadership. These eleven elements were known as Listening, calling, healing, empathy, persuasion, awareness, foresight, stewardship, growth, conceptualization and community building. These concepts provide the idea that servant leadership is a complex construct to operationalize and measure as it involves various factors that constitute the leader as *servant*.

## ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

Organizational commitment is the most important and most popular aspect regarding to the attachment of an individual to organization. The scholars stated that the emotional and psychological attachment to an organization or institute is called the term organizational commitment [28]. If an individual was supported by their organization then it would be said that they had deep sense of organizational commitment [29]. The research tells that there is a strong relationship between supportive activities of an individual and organizational commitment [30]. Ostroff [31] stated that organizational commitment had a negative sense approach with reverse deeds of an individual.

There is a variety to define and design an organizational commitment views. A three typed organizational commitment model was stated by Meyer and Allen [28]. This universal idea revealed as affective, continuance and normative commitment. Affective Commitment reflects commitment based on emotional ties the employee develops with the organization through developing positive work experiences. Normative Commitment reflects commitment based on perceived responsibility towards the organization, for example, rooted in the norms of reciprocity. Continuance Commitment reflects commitment based on the perceived costs, both economic and social, of leaving the organization.

This tri factor model denoted as a part of mannered commitment in general. Meyer and Allen [28] argued that if these three kinds of commitment measured together, it would provide a positive and enhancing relationship on commitment of that person. The commitment model consists of normative, affective and continuance commitment [28].

This model of commitment has been used by researchers to predict important employee outcomes, including turnover and citizenship behaviors, job performance, absenteeism, and tardiness [32]. Others found significant relationships between servant leadership and organizational commitment [4,12]. With these relationships, the researchers were interested to find out a connection between servant leadership and organizational commitment (factor wise and overall), so as to find out the present phases of servant leadership and commitment related to the organization of principals of higher secondary schools and their organizations as well as followers in province Punjab, Pakistan.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

All male and female principals of higher secondary schools (N= 472) in Punjab province were considered as population of the study. Sample was taken by applying simple random sampling. Simple random sampling technique is used when population is rather uniformed and all the individuals in the population have an equal chance of being selected. Out of 472 higher secondary schools in Punjab (242 Male and 230 Female) (Government of Punjab, 2011-12), 129 principals (65 Male and 64 Female) were randomly sampled. Out of 129, 105 principals responded to the questionnaires. The response rate was 81%.

## RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Servant Leadership Questionnaire developed by Liden, Wayne, Zhao, and Henderson [3] was adapted to measure the servant leadership. This scale was designed to assess the servant leadership and its impact on other variables. The factor wise reliability of the scale measured by the authors [3] was as conceptual skills (0.86), empowering (0.90), helping subordinates (0.90), putting subordinates first (0.91), behaving (0.90), emotional healing (0.89) and creating values for the community (0.89).The servant leadership includes 28 items. The scale response ranges from 1 to 5 as strongly disagree and strongly agree, respectively. Proper permission from the authors to use this questionnaire was obtained.

The second questionnaire—Organizational Commitment Questionnaire, developed by Mowday, Steers, and Porter [33] was adopted. A proper permission was obtained through emailing. The reliability of the scale was measured by the authors as 0.87. Three sub factors were introduced as proud to be the part of organization, loyal to the organization, and satisfied to be associated with the organization. This scale has been used by more than forty research scholars and alpha value ranged as 0.82 to 0.93. The scale response ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), respectively. Among the 15 items, item number 3, 7, 9, 11, 12 and 15 were negatively constructed. They were coded reversely. Demographic variables like gender, school name, and school location were included as demographic factors. The reliability for both questionnaires was found as 0.90 and 0.89 respectively.

## DATA COLLECTION

One of the researchers personally visited the majority of the sampled higher secondary schools for data collection. Names, address and contact numbers of the principals serving till 31 March 2014 at the public higher secondary schools in Punjab province were obtained from Executive District Officers (Education). A covering letter contained information which stated the significance values and importance of the present study. Information for returning the survey form, postage paid and self addressed envelopes were mailed to those principals whose schools were far enough to travel for the researchers. The researcher distributed survey packets through physically approach as well as by post to the respondents. Out of 129 questionnaires, 105 questionnaires were collected with return rate of 81%.

## DATA ANALYSIS

Data were analyzed through computer software package SPSS-20. Descriptive statistics were calculated for obtaining mean scores of the principals on each factor of each construct. Pearson correlation was applied to measure the relationship between servant leadership and organizational commitment of respective principals of public higher secondary schools of Punjab province. Further, t-test for independent samples was run to compare male and female, and rural and urban principals' perceptions of servant leadership and organizational commitment. Initially, reliabilities of factors were calculated (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Factor wise description of Servant Leadership Questionnaire**

| # | Factors | # of items | Items included | Cronbach (α) |
|---|---------|-----------|----------------|--------------|
| 1 | Conceptual Skills | 4 | 1-4 | 0.719 |
| 2 | Empowering | 4 | 5-8 | 0.711 |
| 3 | Helping Subordinates | 4 | 9-12 | 0.741 |
| 4 | Subordinates First | 4 | 13-16 | 0.748 |
| 5 | Behaving | 4 | 17-20 | 0.780 |
| 6 | Emotional Healings | 4 | 21-24 | 0.709 |
| 7 | Creating Values | 4 | 25-28 | 0.719 |
| | **Overall** | **28** | **28** | **0.903** |

As perceived by the higher secondary school principals in Punjab, the reliability coefficients were calculated of each subscale of the construct of servant leadership. Table 2 shows that all the seven factors were reliable as their alpha reliabilities raged between .70 (Emotional healing) and .78 (Behaving).

The reliabilities coefficients of the factors of the organizational commitment scale are in Table 2. Table shows that all three factors reliably measured what they were supposed to measure with alpha level range between .70 (loyal) to .74 (proud). See Table2.

**Table 2:  Factor wise description of Organizational Commitment Questionnaire**

| # | Factors | # of items | Items included | Cronbach (α) |
|---|---------|-----------|----------------|--------------|
| 1 | Proud | 5 | 1, 2, 6, 10, 14 | 0.734 |
| 2 | Loyal | 5 | 3, 4, 7, 11, 13 | 0.727 |
| 3 | Satisfied | 5 | 5, 8, 9, 12, 15 | 0.718 |
| | **Overall** | **15** | **1 to 15** | **0.889** |

The researchers were interested to measure the relationship between servant leadership and organizational commitment of principals of higher secondary schools sampled for this study. For this purpose, person r was calculated. The summary of the results is given in Table 3.

**Table 3:  Correlation between Servant Leadership and Organizational Commitment**

| Servant Leadership factors | Organizational Commitment factors | | |
|----------------------------|-------|-------|-----------|
| | Proud | Loyal | Satisfied |
| Conceptual Skills | .376* | .521* | .498* |
| Empowering | .367* | .324* | .375* |
| Helping Subordinates | .493* | .560* | .652* |
| Subordinates First | .815* | .782* | .850* |
| Behaving | .719* | .812* | .735* |
| Emotional Healing | .681* | .697* | .748* |
| Creating Values | .602* | .571* | .493* |
| **Overall**   (r) = 0.942* | | | |
| *Co-relation significant at the level 0.01 (2-tailed). | | | |

According to Table 3, coefficient correlation r value shows that there is positive and significant relationship between all seven factors of servant leadership (such as conceptual skill, empowering, helping subordinates, putting subordinates first, behaving, emotional healing and creating values for the community) and all three factors of organizational commitment (such as proud, loyal, and satisfied).  The r values ranged from 0.850 to 0.324. The factor Putting subordinated first showed highest correlation with two of three factors of Organizational Commitment (r=.82 and .85 respectively. *Empowering* (factor of servant leadership) demonstrated lowest but significantly positive correlation with all three factors of organizational commitment. In overall, a positive and significantly higher correlation was found between servant leadership and organizational commitment, r = 0.942 (P<0.01).

Further, t-test for independent samples was run to compare the difference in male and female principals' perceptions of servant leadership and organizational commitment. The results are given in Table 4.

**Table 4:  Gender-Based comparisons between Servant leadership and Organizational Commitment factors (p<.05) (N= Male=54, Female, 51) (df=103).**

| Factors (SLS) | Gender | Mean | SD | T | Sig |
|---------------|--------|------|------|------|------|
| Conceptual Skills | Male | 15.79 | 2.07 | 2.46 | .016 |
| | Female | 14.80 | 2.07 | | |
| Empowering | Male | 13.77 | 2.83 | 1.12 | .265 |
| | Female | 13.11 | 3.20 | | |
| Helping Subordinates | Male | 14.83 | 3.18 | 2.48 | .015 |
| | Female | 13.35 | 2.92 | | |
| Subordinates first | Male | 13.92 | 3.31 | 3.60 | .000 |
| | Female | 11.84 | 2.53 | | |
| Behaving | Male | 14.85 | 3.31 | 4.60 | .000 |
| | Female | 12.17 | 2.57 | | |
| Emotional Healings | Male | 13.53 | 2.88 | 2.81 | .006 |
| | Female | 12.07 | 2.41 | | |
| Creating values | Male | 14.62 | 2.78 | 3.56 | .001 |
| | Female | 12.78 | 2.52 | | |
| ***Overall SL*** | **Male** | **101.35** | **15.81** | **4.32** | **.000** |
| | **Female** | **90.15** | **9.87** | | |
| **Factors (OCS)** | | | | | |
| Proud | Female | 17.96 | 3.79 | 4.59 | .000 |
| | Male | 15.07 | 2.47 | | |
| Loyal | Female | 17.57 | 3.72 | 3.38 | .001 |
| | Male | 15.43 | 2.64 | | |
| Satisfied | Female | 17.50 | 3.64 | 3.63 | .000 |
| | Male | 15.21 | 2.70 | | |
| ***Overall OC*** | **Female** | **53.03** | **10.38** | **4.29** | **.000** |
| | **Male** | **45.72** | **6.53** | | |

The researchers were interested to know whether male or female principals significantly differed on the factors of servant leadership and organizational commitment. Independent sample t-test revealed that male principals showed higher mean score than female principals on factors of servant leadership such as conceptual skills (M=15.79, SD=2.068), $t(103)=2.457$, p=0.016, helping subordinates (M=14.83, SD=3.184), $t(103)=2.479$, p=0.015, putting subordinates first (M=13.92, SD=3.312), $t(103)=3.604$, p=0.000, behaving (M=14.85, SD=3.310), $t(103)=4.604$, p=0.000, emotional healing (M=13.53, SD=2.879), $t(103)=2.808$, p=0.006 and creating values for the community (M=14.62, SD=2.776), $t(103)=3.562$, p=0.001. Similarly, Male principals showed higher mean score than female principals on the factors of organizational commitment such as proud (M=17.96, SD=3.791), $t(103)=4.589$, p=0.000, loyal (M=17.57, SD=3.724), $t(103)=3.383$, p=0.001 and satisfied (M=17.50, SD=3.643), $t(103)=3.633$, p=0.000. The overall difference on scales revealed that male principals showed higher mean score on servant leadership scale, (M=101.35, SD=15.806), $t(103)=4.323$, p=0.000, as well as on organizational commitment scale (M=53.03, SD=10.381), $t(103)=4.291$, p=0.000).

Lastly, the researchers were interested to know whether rural and urban principals differently perceived servant leadership and organizational commitment constructs. T-test for independent samples was run for this purpose. Independent sample t-test revealed that no significant differences were found between rural and urban schools principals' perceptions of servant leadership and organizational commitment. (See Table 5.

**Table 5: Location Based Comparisons of Servant Leadership and Organizational Commitment (p>0.05). (N= Rural = 62, Urban=43), (df=103).**

| Factors (SLS) | location | Mean | SD | t | Sig |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Conceptual Skills | Rural | 15.46 | 2.215 | .89 | .375 |
|  | Urban | 15.09 | 1.973 |  |  |
| Empowering | Rural | 13.06 | 3.109 | -1.61 | .110 |
|  | Urban | 14.02 | 2.824 |  |  |
| Helping Subordinates | Rural | 14.11 | 3.003 | -.01 | .996 |
|  | Urban | 14.11 | 3.346 |  |  |
| Subordinates first | Rural | 12.79 | 3.073 | -.49 | .628 |
|  | Urban | 13.09 | 3.227 |  |  |
| Behaving | Rural | 13.66 | 3.308 | .41 | .682 |
|  | Urban | 13.39 | 3.200 |  |  |
| Emotional Healings | Rural | 12.62 | 2.747 | -.89 | .374 |
|  | Urban | 13.11 | 2.753 |  |  |
| Creating values | Rural | 13.69 | 2.814 | -.17 | .862 |
|  | Urban | 13.79 | 2.807 |  |  |
| **Overall SL** | **Rural** | **95.51** | **13.78** | **-.42** | **.673** |
|  | Urban | **96.62** | **15.26** |  |  |
| **Factors OCS** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Proud | Rural | 16.61 | 3.330 | .178 | .859 |
|  | Urban | 16.48 | 3.807 |  |  |
| Loyal | Rural | 16.45 | 3.395 | -.294 | .769 |
|  | Urban | 16.65 | 3.449 |  |  |
| Satisfied | Rural | 16.33 | 3.303 | -.186 | .853 |
|  | Urban | 16.46 | 3.58 |  |  |
| **Overall OC** | Rural | **49.40** | **8.99** | **-.107** | **.915** |
|  | Urban | **49.60** | **10.14** |  |  |

## FINDINGS
The major findings of the study are:
1. Positive and significant relationship was found between servant leadership and organizational commitment.
2. Male principals significantly showed higher mean score against female principals on servant leadership as well as organizational commitment.
3. Urban and rural principals perceived in a similar way about servant leadership and organizational commitment.

## DISCUSSION
The present study found out the relationship between servant leadership and organizational commitment of higher secondary school principals in Punjab. Demographic features are somehow, different. A factor wise correlation was analyzed to support the findings. If we evaluate outcomes of the present research with the developer of organizational commitment scale [33], we find that commitment has positive relationship with some employee in sense of job satisfaction and commitment. Similarly if we compare the findings of the present study with the developers of servant leadership scale [3], we find that servant leadership have an impact on organizational commitment. View of the above, the present study found that the servant leadership of higher secondary school principals in Punjab has strong correlation with their organizational commitment.

The findings of the study are encouraging. In Overall, male principals showed higher mean score on servant leadership as well as organizational commitment. This study explains male principals perceive themselves first as a servant of the personnel involved in the organization then as a leader. They believe that they empower their faculty members, help their subordinates, and put their opinions first. The study also found that the higher secondary school principals healing their subordinates emotionally and create values for the community. A qualitative study might be conducted to understand why male teachers tend to rate higher on servant leadership as well as organizational commitment. The findings of this study also reveal that servant leadership and organizational commitment are found in a similar way in rural and urban higher secondary schools. Further, the reasons might be explored why rural and urban school principals perceived servant leadership and organizational commitment is a similar way.

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