Servant Leadership and School Performance: Mediating Effect of Teachers’ Organizational Citizenship Behavior

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ABSTRACT

Problem Statement: Servant leadership is the natural feeling that one has of desiring to serve others. There are different styles of leadership and servant leadership is pillar to succeed in today’s challenging climate and to meet demands of the work place. Hence current study will address the need by exploring multiple indicators of servant leadership and investigate servant leadership and its impact on the followers’ level of organizational citizenship behavior and school performance.

Purpose of the Study: This study sought to determine the relationship between servant leadership style and school performance. This study also examines the mediating role of teachers’ organizational citizenship behavior between school performance and servant leadership.

Methods: The study was designed as cross-sectional relational survey. Through the random sampling technique, data were collected from 813 (i-e 272 head-teachers and 561 teachers) from public secondary within Punjab province. For data collection, two questionnaires were developed by the researcher. In data analysis phase, a t-test was used to compare the opinions of head-teachers and teachers in terms of the dimensions of servant leadership i-e empowerment, accountability and standing back variables; a one-way analysis of variance and simple linear regression analysis were conducted to test the formulated hypotheses.

Findings and Results: According to the study results, it was found that empowerment, standing back, accountability have a positive and significant effect on organizational citizenship behavior. It was found that servant leadership style has effect on organizational citizenship behavior which in turn influences overall school performance. Therefore, we can say that organizational citizenship behavior significantly mediate the effect of servant leadership style on school performance.

Conclusions and Recommendations: Significant effect of servant leadership style indicated that school managers who seriously embrace their role as a servant leader will endeavor to establish a school that will work in shared vision and in cooperation. It may be recommended that school heads need to edifice the necessary facilitation, empowering teachers and the cooperation to help in building pleasant work environment that will compel the teachers to exhibit organizational citizenship behavior which will positively affect on school performance.

Keywords: Servant Leadership, Organizational Citizenship Behavior, School Performance
Introduction

Individual or a group’s behavior is highly influenced by leadership to achieve organizational performances (Hsu, 2001). According to Robbins (2001), organizational goals can easily be accomplished by organizational members under right leadership. The definition of "Leadership" is associated predominantly with the army, but also with the economy and politics. Most of us hear the concepts of military leadership, economic leadership, national leadership or political leadership. According to Anwar (2005) leaders should be compatible with the needs of children, demands of the organizations and challenges of the time to compete with global arena.

There are different styles of leadership and servant leadership is pillar to succeed in today’s challenging climate and to meet demands of the work place. Greenleaf (1977) in response to contemporary survey provided a milestone regarding servant leadership. He respond to the question “Who is the servant-leader? According to him "The servant-leader is servant first…. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first”. No doubt, this definition is best fit to the education sector. Servant leadership has been addressed properly in theory but in practice it has not being focused in fields like education (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). To fill up this gap between theory and practice they suggested implementation of servant leadership to modify organizational behaviors and attitudes of the teachers to develop professionalism.

Theoretical Framework

More effective and influential leadership and successful leadership models implementation is need of the time to update school system. Literature reveals that majority of heads do not rely on leadership but focuses on management. However, Sergiovanni (2001) analyzed that school teachers have thrust for a leadership that is beneficial to create human capital. From many servant leadership model is one to change the existing situation in education sector. Greenleaf (1977) expressed servant leadership “Servant leadership is the natural feeling that one has of desiring to serve others. It seeks to develop individuals who ensure that other's needs are met, and advocates a group-orientated approach to decision-making as a means of strengthening institutions and society”. Greenleaf (1974) explicated idea of servant leadership firstly that was appreciated by Blanchard (2002) and Covey (2006). A servant-leader consists of group who do not build pressure during collaboration with workers they collaborate, pay attention not only to feedback of workers but also workers themselves.

Literature supports that servant leadership is a service provided to the workers for their professional development and welfare with the alignment with organizational goal and objectives. According to another school of thought, servant leadership is avoidance to use power and even not to develop this perception in minds of workers rather develop feelings of empowerment among them to work comfortably at their position (Russel, 2001). Due to less exposure, weak empirical evidences and surface approach some people appose servant leadership (Northouse, 1997). Thus, around the globe organizations are hesitant to accept this belief because of absence of sophisticated approach about it (Russell & Stone, 2002). According to Duchon & Plowman, (2005), servant leadership is complex phenomenon and multiple factors comes under its umbrella hence still its hard task to sort out the dimension and arrange them and overt and covert behavior at work place.

Dimensions of Servant Leadership

The era of early 1990s to 2003 efforts were done to explore themes of servant leadership to operationalize it. Graham (1991) explored the moral and inspirational and dimensions moreover, he argued that relation building, capacity for reciprocity, self-identity, and preocupation with the future were essential themes of the servant leadership. Spears (1998) stressed the dimensions of stewardship, conceptualization, foresight, healing, empathy, listening, persuasion, awareness, commitment, and community building is the contributors of the servant leadership behavior. Farling, Stone, and Winston & Laub (1999) expressed that vision, trust, influence credibility, and service developing people, displaying authenticity, valuing people, building community, providing and sharing leadership are indictors which define boundaries for servant leadership. Russell (2001) & Patterson (2003) argued for credibility, vision, service, modeling, trust,
Empowerment, appreciation, pioneering, agapão love, humility, altruism are captions to servant leadership.

Even though empirical research of servant leadership applied in an education setting is limited, there are many studies that suggest positive relationships within schools (Taylor, Martin, Hutchinson, & Jinks, 2007; Cerit, 2009; Sendjaya & Pekerti, 2010; Black, 2010; Salameh, 2011). These studies provide insight into the impact of servant leadership within the various dimensions of school organizations as well as present possibilities of further investigation.

Servant leader school principals display practices and behaviors which are visible and identifiable to the teachers within the school. These practices included inspiring a shared vision, modeling the way, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouragement. Cerit (2009) examined the six dimensions included: valuing people, development of people, building community, displaying authenticity, providing leadership, and sharing leadership. Among the different servant leader themes Russell (2001) advocated the dimensions including empowerment, accountability, standing back, authenticity, and stewardship. For present study three dimension of servant leadership were taken into account that are empowerment, accountability and standing back because these are hypothetical important for Pakistani education system and cultural fit. Here the empowerment means the extent to which the principal motivates the teachers by encouraging grow both professionally and personally. Accountability promotes responsibility for teachers for performance which they control as well as establish boundaries for the achievement of goals. Standing back is the extent to which the principal gives priority to the needs of teachers and gives them credit for their accomplishment.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)

Organization Citizenship Behavior is “individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization” (Organ, 1988). The term organizational citizenship behavior was first used by Bateman and Organ (1983) to describe the unsolicited behaviors of workers who go above and beyond to assist others in accomplishing the task at hand. These behaviors are performed by the worker with acknowledgment that such behaviors are non-contractual and are not recognized by the organizations formal reward system. These extra-role behaviors are generally beneficial to the overall effectiveness of the organization. According to DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2005) teachers perform acts of OCB because 1) it benefits the organization and 2) it benefits others within the organization. Recent research by DiPaola and Hoy (2005) explored relation among faculty OCB and student achievement.

Review of the literature suggests a head who demonstrates servant leadership behaviors would foster positive behaviors with the faculty and staff. These behaviors could result in an increase in citizenship behavior between teacher-head relationship, teacher-teacher relationship. This open relationship would contribute to better school performance.

School Organizational Performance

Performance is a physical and psychological capability to perform a particular task through a specific method that can be evaluated on a scale (e.g. excellent, average and low). Performance address the organization, employees and individual (Asma, 2012). Performance is heart of every organization; it may say that performance improvement is a major objective to achieve organizational objectives. School organizational performance in terms of students’ achievements was analyzed by Herbst (2003), he examined the relationship between servant leadership and student achievement. He suggests servant leadership behaviors improve teacher effectiveness within the classroom therefore resulting in an increase in student achievement.

Creswell (2003) demonstrated the behavioral aspect as first dimension of performance while second was outcome performance aspect. In this study outcome performance aspect was taken and it was based on students’ achievements.

Rationale of the study

According to Robbins (2001), servant leadership has been a relatively new leadership concept that first emerged in the business sector in the later part of the twentieth century. Early research has explored the relationships of servant leadership with employee trust, job satisfaction, and production at...
the corporate level. While gaining popularity and acceptance within business community, there has been little research on the concept of servant leadership within public education setting.

Epistemology of leadership in education sector should be investigated in Pakistani context and servant leadership should be acknowledging along with other emerging trend to generate and promote human capital. Leadership services needed to be analyzed in comparative perspective. Hofstede (1984) emphasized on cultural diversity to study values and attitudes of individuals. Due to cultural, geographical, political, societal and other difference theories of normative behavior cannot be adopted by other country without modification according to local context.

Pakistan is place of high power distance and collectivist culture but research on leadership and servant leadership provide pin picture of west were power distance is low and community promote individual values. Hence there is strong need to probe Pakistani context to provide ground for newly emerging trend of servant leadership in eastern perspective aligned with collectivist culture and high power distance. Although Drury (2004) analyzed the correlation organizational commitment and servant leadership with job satisfaction but dimensions of leadership were not addressed properly. Hence there is need to explicate these servant leadership with refined boundaries and aspects.

Literature strongly favors dimensions of servant leadership but stronger evidence is needed to analyses multiple dimension of servant leadership which are stimulus for organizational citizenship behavior of followers. Hence current study will address the need by exploring multiple indicators of servant leadership and investigate servant leadership and its impact on the followers’ level of organizational citizenship behavior and school performance. Moreover relationship of servant leadership with organizational citizenship behavior and organizational performance is lacking in the literature. Because of the possible impact of these three constructs on practices in schools, there is a need for studies that investigate any connections which may exist. Freeman (2004) believed that servant leadership is key leadership style which is suitable for running the educational organizations in 21st century and inculcating organizational citizenship behavior among teachers. Therefore, it is intended to see that this leadership style show a positive effect on promotion of organizational citizenship behaviors.

Method

Research Design

This study, which examined the effect in terms of relationship between secondary school head’s servant leadership dimensions with school performance and analysed the mediating role of organizational citizenship behaviour, the descriptive-correlational method was used.

Research Sample

Teacher’s organizational citizenship behavior depends upon the head teachers’ servant leadership style and his management strategies. Therefore, head-teachers as leaders and teachers working in public secondary schools in Punjab were respondent. The population included Government high schools of Punjab province during session 2014-2015 (N = 6256). Sample size of 361 was selected by Morgan’s table from population of 6256; therefore 361 government high schools were taken randomly, moreover two teachers were also taken from each selected school conveniently. In this way 361 head teachers and 722 teachers were participated in study. Questionnaires were posted and 84\% response was received. After data collection incomplete questionnaires (31 copies received from head teachers and 45 copies of teachers) were excluded in data analysis. 813 respondents (272 head teachers and 561 teachers) were only part of final analysis.

Hypothesis

On the basis of proposed theoretical model of servant leadership, organizational citizenship behavior and school performance following hypothesis were formulated

H1: Servant leadership style of head teachers is positively and significantly effect on school performance.

H2: Organizational citizenship behavior mediates the relationship between servant leadership style of head teacher and school performance.
Research Instruments and Procedure

To measure organizational citizenship behavior a questionnaire was developed by researcher that consisted of twenty items designed based on a Likert scale. A 27-item questionnaire was developed on five point Likert scale for measuring the three dimensions of servant leadership. These dimensions include empowerment, accountability, standing back, authenticity, and stewardship. The content validity of the questionnaires was monitored and reliability was determined through Cronbach’s alpha coefficient which was 0.80, and 0.79, respectively. School performance was measure through the results of secondary school certificate examination conducted by boards of intermediates and secondary education of Punjab during the session 2014-2015.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed with the SPSS software. The data were observed to have a normal distribution pattern, and parametric tests were conducted. For the regression analysis, the scattering diagram was used to test the linearity of the relationship, and it was observed that the points gathered around a line—in other words, that the relationship was linear. In data analysis phase, a t-test was used to compare the opinions of head-teachers and teachers in terms of the dimensions of servant leadership i.e. empowerment, accountability and standing back variables; a one-way analysis of variance and simple linear regression analysis were conducted to test the formulated hypotheses. Bivariate correlation was conducted to examine the effect in terms of relationship between main constructs of the study.

Results

There are three variables to examine servant leadership style, organizational citizenship behavior of teachers and school performance. There were significant positive effect among the independent variables correlation such as Empowerment, Accountability and Standing Back as shown in below table 1; in addition the mediator, organizational citizenship behavior was positive and significantly effect on the three dimensions of servant leadership, first empowerment with organization citizenship behavior that was found to be \( r = 0.420, P = 0.041 \); second accountability with organizational citizenship behavior that was \( r = 0.421; P = 0.000 \), and also the third dimension i.e standing back had relationship with the organizational citizenship behavior the mediator \( r = 0.387, P = 0.000 \).

In addition; servant leadership style as well as mediator construct organization citizenship behavior had positive and significant effect on the criterion variable i.e school performance as shown in below table 1.

Table 1
Zero order Correlation among the main variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Empowerment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>0.392**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standing back</td>
<td>0.547**</td>
<td>0.473**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization Citizenship Behavior</td>
<td>0.420**</td>
<td>0.421**</td>
<td>0.387**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Performance</td>
<td>0.417**</td>
<td>0.493**</td>
<td>0.574**</td>
<td>0.647**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed),

Hypothesis test

This study investigates the effect of servant leadership style on organizational citizenship behavior which in turn influences overall school performance. Two hypotheses were developed and tested by regression analysis. The regression assumptions were tested school performance which is the hypothetical dependent variable was normally distributed across the hypothetical independent variables. The co linearity and outliers were also tested, no violations of regression rules were observed.
First hypothesis posited that servant leadership style of head-teacher has significant positive effect on school performance; the result shown in table 3 discovered significant ($\beta=.302; t=3.065; P=0.003$). Also the second objective were significant relation to dependent variable ($\beta=.610; t=6.921; P=0.000$) the predictor explain 38% of school performance changes.

The second hypothesis was to identify the mediating effect of organizational citizenship behavior between servant leadership and school performance. As suggested by Anwar (2005) a mediating test can be established by four steps as shown in the below table; the four steps of mediating were achieved. Organizational citizenship behavior mediates partially the relationship between servant leadership style and school performance since their betas decreased from 0.610 to 0.302 respectively as shown in table 3.

Table 3:
Mediating effect of OCB mediate between Servant Leadership and School Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Step 1 School Performance</th>
<th>Step 2 Organizational Citizenship Behavior</th>
<th>Step 1 School Performance</th>
<th>Step 1 School Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servant Leadership</td>
<td>0.610</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.618</td>
<td>0.000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational Citizenship Behavior</td>
<td>0.696</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table given below explain description of decisions regarding the hypotheses. These results ensure the findings of structure equation model reported in above table.

Table 4
Hypotheses Decisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Empowerment</td>
<td>Organizational citizenship behavior</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>Organizational citizenship behavior</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standing back</td>
<td>Organizational citizenship behavior</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowerment</td>
<td>School Performance</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>School Performance</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standing back</td>
<td>School Performance</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Citizen behavior</td>
<td>School Performance</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Significant at the 0.01 level.

*. Significant at the 0.05 level.
Table 5

Results of Hypotheses Decisions and Mediation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Mediating Variable</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Co-efficient</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Empowerment</td>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>School Performance</td>
<td>0.12*</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Citizenship Behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.07*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>School Performance</td>
<td>0.037</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Citizenship Behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.07*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standing back</td>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>School Performance</td>
<td>0.12*</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Citizenship Behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.07*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Significant at the 0.01 level.
*. Significant at the 0.05 level.

**Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendation**

The study aimed to investigate the effect of servant leadership style on organizational citizenship behavior and school performance. At first, the effect of servant leadership style on organizational citizenship behavior and school performance was found. Secondly, the effect of organizational citizenship behavior on school performance was investigated. Further among the servant leadership style and school performance the mediating role of organizational citizenship behavior was measured.

For the calculation of these effects in terms of relationships, two hypotheses have been tested. It was concluded that empowerment, standing back, accountability have a positive and significant effect on organizational citizenship behavior. It was found that servant leadership style has an effect on organizational citizenship behavior which in turn influences overall school performance. Therefore, we can say that organizational citizenship behavior significantly mediates the effect of servant leadership style on school performance. As per literature on importance of servant leadership, the significant effect of servant leadership style indicated that school managers who seriously embrace their role as a servant leader will endeavor to establish a school that will work in shared vision and in cooperation.

The servant leadership style is inclined to serve, recognize, and empower by supervising and monitoring the response of workers. People will respond with organizational citizenship behaviors by taking initiative, helping each other, participating in various activities, and will take responsibility to groom themselves if leader treat workers in good faith and recognize and appreciate their capabilities. It may be infer that school heads need to edifice the necessary facilitation, empowering teachers and the cooperation to help in building a pleasant work environment that will compel the teachers to exhibit organizational citizenship behavior which will positively affect school performance.

**References**


