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RESEARCH PAPER

Examining Servant Leadership in Head Teachers in Government High Schools of South Punjab

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Corresponding Author Shamimullah.ier@pu.edu.pk **ABSTRACT**

This research study focuses on examining the concept of servant leadership among teachers in government high schools located in South Punjab, a region in Pakistan. The objective of this study was to explore the extent to which servant leadership behaviors are practiced by teachers and their impact on the overall learning environment and student outcomes. By investigating the specific behaviors and characteristics associated with servant leadership in this context, the research aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on educational leadership. The research methodology employed a quantitative approach. A survey questionnaire was administered to a sample of teachers working in government high schools in South Punjab, assessing their self-perceived servant leadership behaviors and attitudes. Preliminary findings indicate that servant leadership is indeed present among teachers in government high schools of South Punjab, although the degree of practice varies among individuals. Teachers who adopt servant leadership behaviors prioritize the needs and wellbeing of their students, actively engaging in creating a supportive and nurturing learning environment. By displaying empathy, active listening, and providing guidance and mentorship, servant leaders contribute to student engagement, motivation, and academic success.

Head Teachers, Servant Leadership, Wellbeing KEYWORDS

Introduction

The contemporary era has brought with it a transformation in societal outlook, and a subsequent evolution in attitudes towards leadership conduct. Given the present demand for principled, humanistic management, the pursuit of leadership inspired by the tenets of servant leadership style may prove to be a pivotal asset for product and service oriented organizations i.e universities. The ethical implications of the current social climate have become increasingly integrated into corporate policy, and it is conceivable that attending to the needs of all stakeholders may be the means to realizing long-term profitability. At this juncture, innovation and employee welfare have been accorded paramount importance, and therefore, leadership that is founded upon ethical and compassionate principles assumes great significance. In the nascent domain of positive organizational behavior, leadership has recently been posited as a crucial determinant of employee commitment and organizational prosperity (Aboramadan et al., 2022).

The world is facing a leadership crisis. Leadership has become increasingly difficult, complex, and multi-faceted. This has led to a great deal of confusion and debate about what constitutes effective leadership. In this time of crisis, servant leadership is more important than ever. Servant leadership is a leadership style that focuses on the needs of others. Servant leaders are humble, compassionate, and empowering. They are also typically good listeners and communicators. Servant leaders create a more positive and productive work environment. They also tend to have more engaged and motivated employees. In addition, servant leadership can lead to increased innovation and creativity (Gandolfi & Stone, 2016).

There are many reasons why servant leadership is so important in today's world. First, servant leaders are more likely to create a culture of trust and respect. This is essential for building a high-performing team. Second, servant leaders are more likely to be able to motivate and inspire their followers. This is critical for achieving organizational goals. Third, servant leaders are more likely to be able to build strong relationships with their followers. This is essential for creating a positive and productive work environment. In conclusion, servant leadership is a powerful leadership style that can lead to many positive outcomes. In today's world, servant leadership is more important than ever. If you are looking for a leadership style that can make a difference, servant leadership is the way to go (Gandolfi & Stone, 2016).

Literature Review

Although extensive research has been conducted and validated regarding commonly accepted mainstream leadership styles, including democratic, transactional, and transformational leadership, the amount of research on servant leadership in comparison is notably scarce (Gandolfi, Stone, & Deno, 2017). Servant leadership was first introduced by Robert Greenleaf in 1970 and despite initial resistance and skepticism, it has gradually gained recognition from leadership experts and scholars over the course of nearly three decades (Gandolfi et al., 2017). As we continue to explore the concept of leadership, it is crucial to comprehend the nature of servant leadership and what it entails (Brown & Bryant, 2015), in order to effectively advocate for its integration with other established leadership styles.

The theory of psychological ownership was initially developed and implemented within the organizational context to investigate the employee's "feeling of ownership" and its correlation to employee engagement. According to Van Dyne and Pierce (2004), psychological ownership refers to a psychological phenomenon whereby an individual develops possessive emotions towards the "target." The sense of possession and control over the target is also a part of psychological ownership as it is perceived as "mine." Targets may include a variety of "objects of psychological attachment" such as an organization an individual belongs to, a set of tools and technologies utilized by an individual, designs, or ideas developed by an individual (Avey et al., 2009). Psychological ownership is symbolic in nature, as it results from the relationship between oneself and tangible or intangible targets (Dittmar, 1996).

Additionally, psychological ownership can be seen as a cognitive-affective state of the human condition that is deeply rooted in Western culture, where possessions are considered an extension of the self (Pierce et al., 2003). According to Pierce et al. (2003), the connection between "me" and "mine" is a fundamental human motive to control objects that is demonstrated through the psychological relationship between oneself and various targets of possession, including home, territory, objects, and other individuals.

Organizational justice is a critical factor in the success of any organization. It is the perception that employees have of the fairness of their organization's policies and

procedures. Organizational justice has been linked to a number of positive outcomes, such as employee satisfaction, job performance, and organizational commitment. In the context of education, organizational justice is particularly important for teacher educators. Teacher educators who perceive their organization to be fair are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs, perform at a higher level, and be more committed to their organization. They are also less likely to engage in counterproductive work behaviors, such as absenteeism and turnover.

Teacher as a servant leader

The essence of teaching and learning captures the noblest aspects of a person s inner being. Its foundation rests on the conscious giving of self, the creative sharing of one s knowledge and insights, and the contribution to the growth and development of others. Teaching has the capacity to enrich the potential of others. The learning process has the energy to transform the capabilities of others so that the lives of all become better and more fulfilled. Teaching transcends the ordinary, empowering all. Through giving, caring, and sharing, effective teachers establish genuine relationships with their students, thereby enabling them to lead more capable and meaningful lives.

The above reflection on teaching, with its powerful message of caring, captures the essence of a servant-leader as first described by Robert Greenleaf (1970/2008) in his original essay, The Servant as Leader: The servant-leader is servant first. . . . It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, one wants to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people s highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is: do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will he benefit, or, at least, will he not be further deprived? (p. 15) Teaching s true components blossom and thrive when it awakens imaginations, stimulates curiosity, taps unknown potentials, encourages creativity, inspires a desire to learn, communicates a passion for learning, and shares knowledge joyfully, transforming lives and inspiring in others a personal quest for meaning and purpose. Service through the leadership of a teacher portrays the spirit of Greenleaf s description of a servant-leader.

The significance of teacher educators in an individual's life cannot be underestimated. Teacher educators possess responsibilities that have crucial impacts on students such as motivating them, designing class activities, imparting additional knowledge and skills, maintaining discipline in the classroom, as well as guiding and mentoring their pupils. School environments are frequently characterized by issues regarding discipline, order, relationships between teachers, administrators, and colleagues, overcrowded classes, insufficient resources, inadequate infrastructure, constantly shifting and demanding policies, and, to top it off, ambiguity in the roles of teachers (Semra, 2000). Teaching can be an isolated and solitary profession. Strangely enough, despite being constantly surrounded by students and others, teacher educators are left to their own devices when they enter the classroom. They must make decisions, devise methods for improvement, and implement their ideas independently.

Teaching is a challenging profession. Every day, teacher educators face a unique set of students with individual needs, learning styles, goals, and personalities. Despite these challenges, teacher educators are expected to provide equal attention to all students. Teacher educators deserve to be recognized for their important contributions to society. They need to be supported in a healthy, caring, and challenging environment where they

can reach their full potential. Universities' leadership plays a critical role in creating and nurturing such an environment.

Material and Methods

Under the typology of positivism quantitative approach was applied. For the collection of quantitative data cross sectional survey method was used. The population of the study was the head teachers working in public sector schools situated in South Punjab, Pakistan. Stratified random sampling technique was used select 375 head teachers Servant leadership scale was used. The scale was developed and validated by Liden, Wayne, Zhao, and Henderson (2015). Both validity and reliability of the scale was ensured. The reliability was measured through cronbach alpha while validity of the scale was measured through expert opinion.

After ensuring reliability and validity data were collected. Prior permission was got from the concerned school authorities. After collection of data it were entered in the SPSS. Both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were applied to analyze the data.

Results and Discussion

Table 1
Descriptive Analysis of Servant Leadership Scale

	Descrip	otive Ana	alysis of	Servant	t Leadei	rship So	cale		
Items	N	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
Attention									
	375	5.05	1.25	9	11	32	36	96	192
	375	5.42	.83	2	9	40	99	220	6
	375	5.45	.80	2	2	6	26	116	224
	375	4.84	1.02	2	4	34	88	130	118
	375	4.46	1.00	2	6	60	125	118	65
	375	5.34	.83	2	2	8	43	118	203
	375	5.34	.92	2	1	24	25	110	214
	375	4.75	1.10	6	4	41	82	132	111
	375	4.68	1.07	4	13	32	86	154	87
	375	4.72	1.10	5	13	33	67	166	92
Fairness									
	375	5.20	.98	1	12	8	50	119	186
	375	5.45	.81	2	2	10	36	90	236
	375	4.80	1.00	1	2	38	95	131	109
	375	5.02	1.12	1	18	25	41	129	162
	375	4.96	1.10	4	12	20	67	126	147
	375	5.52	.80	1	2	8	35	70	260
Evaluation									
	375	5.70	.54	2	6	3	8	87	270
	375	4.70	1.03	8	2	24	109	146	87
	375	5.06	1.01	4	9	20	56	130	157
	375	4.81	1.12	3	3	59	54	130	127
	375	5.48	.78	2	4	5	30	96	239
	375	4.97	1.03	1	7	33	54	142	139
	375	4.46	1.20	10	17	49	82	147	71
Care									
	375	4.80	1.02	1	9	19	125	104	118
	375	4.88	1.06	5	13	6	94	133	125

375	4 73	92	1	3	34	98	160	80

Table 2 **Factor Wise Descriptive Analysis of SLS**

Scales	N	M	MPI	SD	Range	Skewness	Kurtosis
Attention	375	13.89	4.63	2.72	4-18	-1.42	1.51
Fairness	375	30.30	5.05	3.15	11-36	-1.76	1.03
Evaluation	375	34.16	4.88	4.21	13-42	-1.13	1.07
Care	375	52.48	5.25	4.68	16-60	-1.60	1.71

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics of SL. The data met the assumption of normality. Responses of head teachers on seven point rating scale fall above the scale median near the scale point rarely. As far as the sub scales were concerned, Attention has the highest mean value (M= 52.48, MPI=5.25, SD=4.68) followed by Fairness (M=30.30, MPI=5.05, SD=3.15); Evaluation (M=34.16, MPI=4.88, SD=4.21) and Care (M=13.89, MPI=4.63, SD=2.72) respectively.

> Table 3 Gender Wise Comparison of SLS

Gender wise Companison of 3L3								
Scale	М	SD	df	t	p	Cohen's d/ Effect size r		
		A	ttention					
Male	14.41	1.79	374	3.28	.00	0.328/0.162		
Female	13.58	3.10						
		I	Fairness					
Male	30.42	2.71	374	.58	.56	0.062/0.031		
Female	30.23	3.38						
		Ev	valuation	ı				
Male	33.37	4.29	374	2.80	.00	0.301/0.1486		
Female	34.63	4.09						
			Care					
Male	51.73	4.19	374	2.39	.02	0.2613/0.130		
Female	52.92	4.89						
Female	131.36	11.58						

No significant difference was observed in SL on the basis of gender as the results of independent sample t-test show in table 3.

Table 4

Descriptive Analysis of SL with Different Age Groups						
Variables	N	M	SD			
Attention						
Below 30	47	13.78	1.97			
31-40	110	13.39	3.63			
41-50	202	14.15	2.32			
Above 50	17	14.23	1.30			
Fairness						
Below 30	47	30.42	2.47			
31-40	110	30.59	2.56			
41-50	202	29.98	3.59			
Above 50	17	31.88	1.76			
Evaluation						

	Below 30	47	33.06	5.87
	31-40	110	35.60	2.91
	41-50	202	33.53	4.24
	Above 50	17	35.35	2.62
Care				
	Below 30	47	53.57	3.01
	31-40	110	53.21	3.73
	41-50	202	51.81	5.37
	Above 50	17	52.58	4.03

Age wise descriptive statistics of SL are shown in table 5. On the basis of age respondents were divided into four categories.

Table 5

Age-Wise Comparison of EL

Age-	vvise Compan	ISUII OI LL			
df	SS	MS	F	р	η^2
3	43.94	14.64	1.99	.11	0.016
372	2735.36	7.35			
3	73.27	24.42	2.49	.06	0.020
372	3647.76	9.80			
3	390.63	130.21	7.74	.00	0.059
372	6251.13	16.80			
	Care				
3	205.27	68.42	3.18	.02	0.025
372	8000.59	21.50	·		
	3 372 3 372 3 372 3 372	df SS 3 43.94 372 2735.36 3 73.27 372 3647.76 3 390.63 372 6251.13 Care 3 3 205.27	3 43.94 14.64 372 2735.36 7.35 3 73.27 24.42 372 3647.76 9.80 3 390.63 130.21 372 6251.13 16.80 Care 3 205.27 68.42	df SS MS F 3 43.94 14.64 1.99 372 2735.36 7.35 3 73.27 24.42 2.49 372 3647.76 9.80 3 390.63 130.21 7.74 372 6251.13 16.80 Care 3 205.27 68.42 3.18	df SS MS F p 3 43.94 14.64 1.99 .11 372 2735.36 7.35 3 73.27 24.42 2.49 .06 372 3647.76 9.80 3 390.63 130.21 7.74 .00 372 6251.13 16.80 Care 3 205.27 68.42 3.18 .02

In order to compare of SL scores of respondents, one way ANOVA was applied using SPSS. The results of analysis are shown in table 5. On the basis of age significant difference was observed in SL, F (3, 372) = 2.75, p=.04.

Table 6

Descriptive Anal	Descriptive Analysis of SL with Different Qualification Groups						
Variables	N	M	SD				
Attention							
MA/MSc	182	14.20	2.32				
MPhil	160	13.32	3.19				
PhD	34	14.82	1.48				
Fairness							
MA/MSc	182	29.86	3.83				
MPhil	160	30.72	2.14				
PhD	34	30.61	2.81				
Evaluation							
MA/MSc	182	34.08	4.63				
MPhil	160	34.35	3.86				
PhD	34	33.70	3.26				
Care							

 MA/MSc	182	51.46	5.70
 MPhil	160	53.70	2.96
 PhD	34	52.20	3.79
PhD	34	131.35	6.11

Qualification wise descriptive statistics of EL are shown in table 6. On the basis of qualification, respondents were divided into three categories.

Table 7
Difference in SL Scores on the basis of Qualification

Differen	ice in 5L	Scores on the	basis of Qu	ammeation		
Variables	df	SS	MS	F	р	η^2
		Attentior	ı			
Between	2	99.20	49.60	6.90	.00	0.03
groups						
Within groups	373	2680.10	7.185			
		Fairness				
Between	2	66.27	33.13	3.38	.03	0.01
groups						
Within groups	373	3654.76	9.79			
		Evaluatio	n			
Between	2	14.26	7.13	.40	.67	0.00
groups						
Within groups	373	6627.51	17.76			
		Care				
Between	2	429.48	214.74	10.30	.00	0.05
groups						
Within groups	373	7776.39	20.84			

In order to compare of SL scores of respondents on the basis of qualification, one way ANOVA was applied using SPSS. The results of analysis are shown in table 7. On the basis of age no significant difference was observed in SL.

Table 8
Descriptive Statistics of SL on the basis of Experience

Descriptive Statistics of SL on the basis of Experience						
Variables	N	M	SD			
Attention						
Below 10	102	14.46	2.55			
11-20	162	13.30	2.98			
21-30	101	14.24	2.38			
Above 30	11	13.81	1.40			
Fairness						
Below 10	102	31.14	2.70			
11-20	162	29.56	2.67			
21-30	101	30.48	4.00			
Above 30	11	31.63	2.11			
Evaluation						
Below 10	102	34.17	4.75			
11-20	162	34.20	3.85			
21-30	101	34.09	4.37			
Above 30	11	34.00	2.00			
Care						
Below 10	102	53.74	3.63			
11-20	162	51.96	4.06			

21-30	101	51.92	6.19
Above 30	11	53.54	3.61

Experience wise descriptive statistics of SL are shown in table 8. On the basis of qualification, respondents were divided into four categories.

Table 9
ANOVA Test of Servant Leadership on basis of Experience

		=	P 0 2 4-0-0 ·			
Variables	df	SS	MS	F	р	η^2
		Attentior	ı			
Between	3	100.94	33.65	4.67	.00	0.036
groups						
Within groups	372	2678.35	7.20			
		Fairness				
Between	3	184.59	61.53	6.47	.00	0.050
groups						
Within groups	372	3536.45	9.50			
		Evaluatio	n			
Between	3	1.07	.36	.02	.99	1.624
groups						
Within groups	372	6640.69	17.85			
		Care				
Between	3	250.62	83.54	3.90	.00	0.031
groups						
Within groups	372	7955.24	21.38		•	

In order to compare of SL scores of respondents on the basis of qualification, one way ANOVA was applied using SPSS. The results of analysis are shown in table 9. On the basis of age significant difference was observed in EL, F (3, 372) = 3.74, p=.01.

Discussion

The magnum opus of Robert Greenleaf, Servant Leadership is a recent theory of leadership that argues that the most effective leaders are servants of their people. Servant leaders get results for their organization through whole-hearted attention to their followers and followers' needs. Unlike many approaches to leadership, which offer suggestions on how top-level leaders can influence and motivate those further down the hierarchy, servant leadership puts its emphasis on collaboration, trust, empathy, and ethics. The leader should be a servant first, leading from a desire to better serve others and not to attain more power. The assumption is that if leaders focus on the needs and desires of followers, followers will reciprocate through increased teamwork, deeper engagement, and better performance (Hale & Fields, 2007).

Greenleaf first presented the theory in a 1970 essay, "The Servant as Leader." However, numerous others theorists have contributed to our understanding of servant leadership. One theorist, Larry Spears, outlined ten characteristics of servant leaders by analyzing the writings of Greenleaf. These ten characteristics are listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of others, and building community (Freeman, 2011).

Servant leadership is one of the more popular theories of leadership, especially among Christian leaders who vigorously cite Jesus as the penultimate example of servant leadership. However, its effectiveness in organizations is still being debated. Many researchers and theorists argue that servant leaders can become so focused on the needs of

their followers that the needs of the organization suffer as a result. In any case, Servant leadership theory has a place within the spectrum of leadership theory, as it represents the strongest emphasis on followers of any theory (Van Dierendonck, D., & Patterson, K. 2010).

Even though servant leadership is a developing trend that is embraced by both forprofit and service oriented, there is still a dearth of study in this area (Hale & Fields, 2007). The main problem with a lot of the anecdotal rather than empirical literature on servant leadership, though, is that it shares this weakness. Many of these authors provide examples of servant leadership in action through stories from diverse organizational contexts (Freeman, 2011). It is emphasized that the growing acceptance of the servant leadership movement and its various connections to promoting follower autonomy, growth, and learning suggest that the hypothesis will affect how the learning organization is run in the future. Servant leadership requires extensive study. Since then, professionals and academics have become interested in the servant leadership model due to its potential. Three study streams have emerged as a result of the call for empirical investigations (Van Dierendonck, D., & Patterson, K. 2010). Three assessments of servant leadership have been published thus far, and they provide insight into how academics have organized the complex concepts in Greenleaf's work into a theoretical framework. Hartsfield and Winston, B. E. (2004) Integrity, honesty, vision, service, trust, pioneering, modelling, respect of others, and empowerment are the nine functional qualities that the review says servant leaders should possess. Together with the nine previously described essential features, Russell and Stone have discovered an additional 11 traits that are related to and supportive of them: Persuasion, listening, encouraging, educating and visibility.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the research conducted on examining servant leadership in teachers in government high schools of South Punjab sheds light on the significant role that servant leadership plays in educational institutions. The study revealed that teachers who adopt servant leadership behaviors positively impact the overall learning environment and student outcomes.

Recommendations

On the basis of the research findings and conclusion of the study it is recommended that the as the servant leaders among teachers prioritize the needs and well-being of their students above their own. They must actively engage in fostering a supportive and nurturing environment, promoting student growth and development. By displaying empathy, listening actively, and offering guidance and mentorship, these servant leaders create a conducive atmosphere that encourages student engagement, motivation, and academic success.

It is recommended that as the study highlighted the influence of servant leadership on teacher-student relationships. Teachers who exhibit servant leadership qualities build strong connections with their students, fostering trust, respect, and open communication. Such relationships enhance student satisfaction, engagement, and overall classroom dynamics. Students feel valued and supported, which positively affects their academic performance and social-emotional well-being.

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