

AWARENESS AND PRACTICE OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP STYLE THROUGH SERVICE IN CENTRAL KENYA CONFERENCE SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Meshack Ambani Mulongo

Department of Planning, Administration & Curriculum Development,
Karatina University, KENYA.

mulongomesh@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The objective of the study was to evaluate the extent to which Central Kenya Conference (CKC) region principals practice Servant Leadership style through service in their institutions. The research was informed by Transformational Leadership Theory as put forth by Burns in the late 20th century. The Research question in the study was: What is the teachers' rating on principals' practice of Servant Leadership style in their institutions through service. Responses to this question within the topic were to determine the extent to which principals practice servant leadership through service. Purposive Sampling technique was applied to come up with 82 teachers and 6 principals who formed respondents. This technique allows a researcher to use cases that have the required information with respect to the study; hence the case in this study. Principals and teachers were identified as respondents due to their ability to comprehend questionnaire items in relation to the nature of the variables. The research design used was Descriptive Survey. Data was analyzed by standard t-test and ANOVA procedures at $\alpha=0.05$. Analyzed data was presented using descriptive statistics in form of frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations. At a pre-test stage, servant leadership through service yielded coefficient of 0.86. That indicated reliability was acceptable to be used with a questionnaire return rate of 78.7%. The outcome yielded $\mu=2.44$ on responses on servant leadership through service. The t-test for equality of means generated sig. (2-tailed) of .235 for leadership through service. Since $p>0.05$, there was no significant difference between the evaluation rating of male and female teachers on the principals' practice of servant leadership through service. Male and female teachers had similar evaluation of their principals' practice of servant leadership through service.

Keywords: Servant, Leadership, Service, Awareness, Practice

INTRODUCTION

Servant leadership is one of the most influential leadership styles in modern times. Greenleaf (1976) holds that an ideal servant leader leads through service, support and empowerment. In addition, such leaders are identified by their subjects to be Primus Interperes (First among equals) in Latin language. Furthermore, White (1985) cautions Central Kenya Conference region leaders to be servant leaders. Musvosvi (1991) affirms that leaders should emulate servant leadership style as guided by Jesus Christ, the Master Servant Leader. Spears (1998) support the construct that servant leadership is about service. In the same vein, Kivuti (2006) asserts that servant serve people, never expecting anything in return. Adams (2008) asserts that servant leadership enhances human resource skills which are necessary in mobilization of project teams; hence the importance of enhancing this type of leadership in learning institutions. In addition, Senjaya and Perkiti (2010), in their study, found out that leaders who portray high servant leadership behaviors tend to be more trusted by their followers compared

to those who do not. In another study, Hersy et.al; (2006) found out that servant leaders are more concerned about group members' feelings and will tend to tolerate disruptive team member, which may in turn create harmony and teamwork among members of an organization. Barrow & Mirabella (2009) view servant leaders as those leaders who seek to create a business milieu in which all workers feel responsible for creating an organization that inspires them. There has been a marked leadership problem in Central Kenya Region secondary schools in recent times as noted by the CKC (1995) Education commission which guided schools to adopt CKC region educational leadership principles. However, amid the recommendations of the commission, there have been increased levels of unrest caused by lack of proper leadership and managerial skills in these schools. For example, there have been strikes in the recent past as exemplified by Karura School in 2009 and Kiriiria School in 2011. Therefore the study was meant evaluate the extent to which servant leadership style is practiced in Central Kenya region through *service*, which, if significantly practiced, would lead to reduction in levels of unrest. The findings of this research were to be of great importance to education stakeholders in the Central Kenya Conference region as well as a source of reference to future researchers in Education administrations.

CONTEXT AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Jesus Christ, when on earth, was the role model for servant leadership through service. This style of leadership is brought out in the words of Jesus to His disciples: "The greatest among you be as the youngest, and the leader as the servant...I am among you as the one who serves" (Luke 22:26-28). Further, Jesus stated that He did not come to be served, but to serve. White (1915) noted that servant leaders need to have high standards. They should be people who are engaged in service for the master and ready to have a higher, deeper and broader experience in leadership. As they serve, these leaders should have cultured speech, which should be expressed in pleasant tone, pure and correct language and words that are kind and courteous (White, 1941). Servant leadership, through service; involves patience with those for whom servant leaders labor, not scorning the simplicity of work, but looking to the blessed result. White (1944) observes that every department of the course of God needs men and women who serve others with sympathy for their woes. Therefore, SDA school leaders need to embrace leadership through service in order to uphold this noble leadership Principle.

Leaders in the SDA church institutions do not own the positions they hold, or the authority by which they lead in those positions. These positions of leadership are loaned rather than owned. White (1985) gives a cautionary counsel to leaders in the SDA church institutions: "No man has been made a master to rule the mind and conscience of a fellow being. Let us be very careful how we deal with God's blood-bought heritage. To no man has been appointed the work of being a ruler over his fellow men...among the Lord's servants there is to be no commanding" (White, 1985, pp. 27, 32). Servant leadership is serving, not leading (De Pree, 1989). By serving other people, leaders lead other people to the point of self-actualization, whereby workers are in a position to enjoy their commitment to the organization they serve.

Musvosvi (1991) puts it clear that servant leaders should not be overly concerned with quick results, but should generate self-perpetuating change. In addition, he argues that servant leaders have a great task of changing people in their institutions; not just formulation and enforcement of rules. It is, therefore, important for leaders in the Education Department of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church to echo this important aspect of servant leadership in order to sustain this desired leadership style. Leaders are supposed to influence people and change them positively.

Maxwell (1993) states in his favorite leadership proverb that the person who thinks is leading and has no one following him, is only taking a walk. Hence servant leaders must have followers, who are eventually changed positively into what they were not. Dunbebin (1999) asserts that leadership depends upon the confidence that people have in their leaders. This includes trust in their character and competence. He adds that in schools where leaders are motivated to serve others, all employees work together to achieve shared goals. Chapel (2000) argues that: Servant leadership through service brings order and meaning to employees and when they feel order and meaning that they are part of a team, their energy explodes and great things happen in their advantage and in their employers' advantage too. D'souza (2001) believes leadership through service recognizes that people have an intrinsic value beyond their tangible input as employees; and those servant leaders have a deep commitment to the growth of each employee.

According to Purkey and Siegel (2002) leadership through service makes leaders discover an astonishing capacity to take care of the general good of the public. Rude (2003) confirms that most institutions of the world have embraced leadership through service approach with great success in their endeavors, hence positive outcomes in their institutions. To Spears (2004), leadership through service involves persuasion, for servant leaders are out to convince others and not force them into doing what they do not like.

Cerff (2004) carried out a study on the effects of servant leadership through service on teacher's job satisfaction. Out of a study population of 595 teachers, Data was collected from 29 teachers. Findings revealed there was a strong positive relationship between leadership through service and teachers' job satisfaction. Therefore, there is need for leaders in CKC schools to provide leadership through service if they want their followers to be satisfied and happy at work. Another proponent of leadership through service, Gehman (2008), argues that a servant leader is easily identified. If his leadership position is taken away, he does not fight for it. And when it is given, he does not make a big deal about it. Leadership through service is a commitment to serving God and people, and leaves the authority and positioning to God. In conclusion of this part, Patterson (2010) is of the opinion that leadership through service recognizes authority as residing in those led, flows up through elected leaders, who lead and manage institutions, hence the concept of leadership through support.

METHODS

Research Design

Research design was a quantitative. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006) assert that quantitative research method relies on principles of confirmation, proof and substantiation. These principles are realized through coding, analysis and presentation of findings using descriptive and inferential statistics. The design narrowed down to was descriptive survey in nature. According to Bog and Gall (1989), descriptive survey research is intended to produce statistical information about aspects of education that interest policy makers and educators. Hence the applicability of this design in the study carried out.

Sampling Design

Information was gathered using questionnaires. Target population was 180 teachers and the 12 secondary school principals whose schools are sponsored and managed by CKC region, Kenya. Non-probability sampling, Purposive sampling method was used to come up with 6 principals and 90 teachers from those schools. According to Kothari (2011), this type of sampling items for the sample are selected deliberately by the researcher from the universe on the basis that the chosen sample will be generalized over the entire target population; hence the case herein. Teachers and principals were selected due to the fact that they would

easily comprehend the nature of items in the research instrument. In addition, the researcher aimed at evaluating the extent to which servant leadership was practiced by principals. Principals were selected for the purpose of comparing their responses with those of their subjects to come up with logical inferences.

Data Collection

A self-constructed questionnaire was chosen and used because this instrument is used to gathers data over a large sample, upholds confidentiality, saves on time and does not allow for biasness. Respondents used the Likert scale to establish the extent to which principals in CKC region practice servant leadership through service

Table 1. Scale of interpretation

<i>Range</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
3.51-4.00	4	Agree (A)/Always
2.51-3.50	3	Tend to Agree (TA)/Sometimes
1.51-2.50	2	Tend to Disagree (TD)/Rarely
1.00-1.50	1	Disagree (D)/Never

Instrumentation

The researcher used content type of validity whereby UEAB Education department professionals looked at the instrument and advised where adjustment was necessary. The advice given was used by the researcher to improve on the quality of the questionnaires. Reliability was established by a pilot study also called a pre-test (Mugenda and Mugenda 2003). The pilot was done in three CKC region secondary schools which had similar characteristics to the actual schools under study.

Data Analysis

Responses to questionnaires were subjected to a statistical treatment using Chronbach’s Alfa Coefficient. The cut- off point was 0.60. Reliability analysis for servant leadership through service, support and empowerment yielded coefficients of 0.86, 0.94 and 0.91 respectively, were acceptable levels for use.

Closed Ended Questionnaire Items

Instruction: Circle the number that shows your response to the questions below :

4- Agree (A) 3- Tend to Agree (TA) 2- Tend to Disagree(TD) 1- Disagree (D)

<i>Leadership through Service</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>TA</i>	<i>TD</i>	<i>D</i>
My principal has a commitment to listening intently to others	4	3	2	1
My principal responds to any problem by listening <i>first</i>	4	3	2	1
I am recognized by my principal for my unique talents	4	3	2	1
My principal is a source of healing to those with broken spirit and hurt	4	3	2	1
My principal seeks to convince others rather than coerce compliance	4	3	2	1

<i>Leadership through Service</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>TA</i>	<i>TD</i>	<i>D</i>
My principal is effective at building consensus within the school	4	3	2	1
My principal is committed to serving the needs of others	4	3	2	1
My principal emphasizes the use of openness	4	3	2	1
My principal is committed to assisting me in my spiritual growth	4	3	2	1
My principal makes funds available for my professional development	4	3	2	1

FINDINGS

Table 2. Teachers’ Assessment of Principals’ Practice of Servant Leadership through Service N=82

<i>Attribute</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>
1 My principal has a commitment to listening intently to others	2.57	.994
2 My principal responds to any problem by listening first	2.49	1.091
3 I am recognized by my principal for my unique talents	2.58	1.026
4 My principal is a source of healing to those with broken spirit	2.42	1.093
5 My principal seeks to convince others rather than coerce compliance	2.52	1.068
6 My principal is effective at building consensus within the school	2.49	1.036
7 My principal is committed to serving the needs of others	2.48	1.102
8 My principal emphasizes the need for openness	2.36	1.165
9 My principal is committed to assisting me in my spiritual growth	2.41	1.081
10 My principal makes funds available for my professional development 2.09	2.09	1.021
	2.44	.901

The first aspect of evaluation was principals’ practice of servant leadership through *service*. This part had 10 questions. The highest $\mu=2.58$ and $\sigma = 1.04$, where teachers tend to agree to the statement: “I am recognized by my principal for my unique talents. The second highest $\mu=2.57$ and $\sigma = 0.99$, which implied that principals tend to have a commitment to listening intently to teachers. The two responses in reference to the scale of interpretation mean that principals in CKC secondary schools sometimes listen to their teachers and recognize their unique talents. The lowest $\mu=2.09$ and $\sigma = 1.02$, which indicates that principals rarely make funds available for teachers’ professional development. The overall μ generated on principals’ practice of servant leadership through service was $\mu=2.44$. This means principals conclusively rarely practice servant leadership in CKC secondary schools through service.

The graph below shows respondents’ answers to the questionnaire part on the practice of servant leadership through service. Note: Letters A, B, C...in the graphs below represent questionnaire items in their above order.

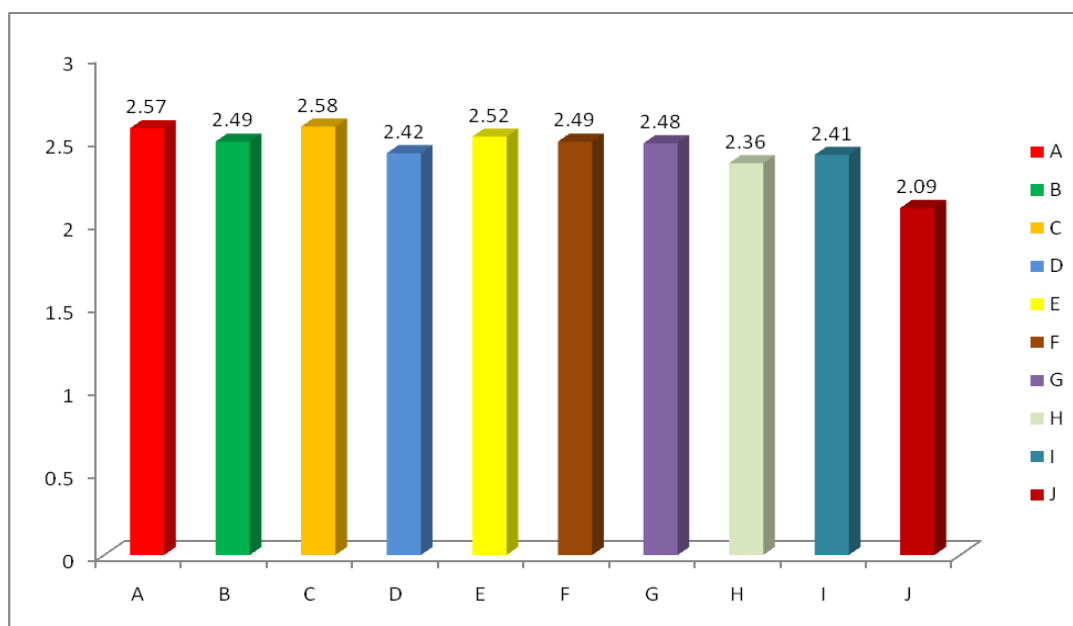


Figure 1. Data pattern for principals' practice of servant leadership through service in CKC secondary schools

The t-test for equality of means generated Sig. (2-tailed) as follows: .235, .282 and .611 for leadership through service, support and empowerment respectively. Since $p > 0.05$ for all the three cases, thus there was no significant difference between the evaluation rating of male and female teachers on the principal's practice of servant leadership. Male and female teachers tend to have similar evaluation of their principal's practice of servant leadership in all areas under consideration.

Table 3. ANOVA table for comparison by Age Bracket.

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Leadership through service	Between Groups	.359	2	.180	.217	.805
	Within Groups	65.384	79	.828		
	Total	65.743	81			

Table 4 shows ANOVA data generated. Servant leadership through service yielded $F=0.217$ which had an associated p-value of 0.805, greater than $\alpha=0.05$.

Table 4. ANOVA table for comparison by teaching experience

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Leadership through service	Between Groups	.018	2	.009	.011	.989
	Within Groups	65.725	79	.832		
	Total	65.743	81			

The table 1.5 shows that all calculated F values had associated p-values which were greater than $\alpha=0.05$. Consequently, the null hypothesis was accepted for principal's practice of servant leadership through service. Thus there was no significant difference in the evaluation

rating of principal's practice of servant leadership when teachers are grouped according to teaching experience. Across years of teaching experience have similar evaluation of their principal's practice of servant leadership through service.

DISCUSSION

Findings from the evaluation of teachers on their principals' practice of servant leadership through service mean that principals in CKC secondary schools do not practice servant leadership through service as teachers tend to disagree on the scale of interpretation at $\mu=2.44$. It therefore implies that principals need to improve in their practice of servant leadership. At $\mu=2.40$, it meant that principals rarely practice servant leadership in CKC secondary schools. It can therefore be inferred that statistically, servant leadership is rarely practiced by principals in CKC secondary schools. There should be means and ways of CKC Education Department encouraging principals in their schools to practice servant leadership.

The Independent Samples t-Test for comparison by gender generated Sig. (2-tailed): .235 for leadership through service.

CONCLUSION

The findings revealed that CKC principals do not practice Servant Leadership in their institutions and that even if they do, it is to a negligible degree. The paper has discussed the nature of investigation that was carried out, based on means generated from the variable considered, the article was hence supported. The inferences below were therefore are logical to be arrived at;

1. The Director of Education in CKC may use the findings to enhance the practice of Servant Leadership style through service in secondary schools.
2. The outcome of this study may be used by school principals to rethink their leadership practices and embrace Servant Leadership through Service.
3. The research findings may be used by scholars as a source of reference for scholarly works.
4. The findings may be used to empower employees in CKC secondary schools; hence raise their motivation and commitment to their work.

There was no significant difference between the evaluation rating of male and female teachers on their principals' practice of servant leadership through in CKC secondary schools

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