

## Servant Leadership Practices among School Principals in Educational Directorates in Jordan

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### Abstract

*This study was to determine the extent that teachers perceived practice of Servant Leadership among school principals in Jordanian educational directorate. This study used the Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA) tool. Results revealed that servant leadership practiced in moderate levels. Three categories of servant leadership: builds community, displays authenticity, and shares leadership were in high level of servant leadership practices. While values others, develops people, and provides leaders were in moderate level of practice servant leadership. Results indicate that teachers scores on six dimensions of servant leadership had no significantly differ regarding to their sex. The results indicate that teachers who have short number of years of teaching experiences perceived the level of practice of “develops others” among school principals higher than other teachers with a medium and high number of years of teaching experience. Also, the results indicate that teachers who have medium number of years of teaching experiences perceived the level of practice of “builds community” among school principals higher than other teachers with a short and high number of years of teaching experience. No difference in teachers perceived the level of practice of servant leadership among school principals related to their academic qualifications.*

**Key Words:** Servant leadership, school principals, teachers, educational directorates, Jordan.

### Introduction

The first introduced concept of servant leadership by Greenleaf (1970) with his foundational essay *The Servant as Leader*. The work surrounding servant leadership from the early 1990s focused on identifying themes that could help to operationalize the concept of servant leadership. Laub (1999) put forward valuing people, developing people, building community, displaying authenticity, providing leadership, and sharing leadership:

**Value People:** People are to be valued and developed, not used, for the purposes of the leader. Leaders accept the fact that people have present value not just future potential. As leaders work with people in organizations they will serve them by displaying the qualities of Valuing People (Laub, 1999). Serve others first, They focus on the needs of others and how they can best meet them. Believe & Trust in people, Leaders are willing to give trust...to believe that others can do the job and have positive intentions. Listen receptively, When leaders truly listen to others they will hear them if they listen non-judgmentally. They listen because they know that it is one of the best ways to show that they value others (Laub, 1999).

According to Lubin (2001), “The first impulse for a servant leader is to listen first and talk less” (p. 32). Lubin (2001) concurred that successful servant leaders “begin by making a deep commitment to listening, not only to others but to their own inner voice as well. Essential to the growth of the leader is the condition to have quiet reflective time for deeper understanding” (p. 32).

**Develop People:** Leaders see it as their responsibility to help others grow towards their full potential as servants and leaders. The mistakes of others are seen as opportunities to learn. Leaders believe that people have both present value and future potential (Laub, 1999).

Provide for learning, offer people opportunities for new learning. They provide an atmosphere where mistakes can lead to new insights. Leaders join them in learning and are never satisfied with the status quo. Model appropriate behavior, Leaders don't just tell others what to do. They model it for them and do it with them. They help people to develop by working alongside them so that can learn from their example. Build up through affirmation, organizations encourage others...honor others...accept others...build up others. They catch others doing it right.

Leaders recognize accomplishments and celebrate creativity. They speak words of encouragement and intentionally affirm (Laub, 1999).

**Builds Community:** They desire to build community; a sense that all are part of a loving, caring team with a compelling shared vision to accomplish. Leaders know that people will be more impacted by the quality of relationships than they will be by the accomplishment of tasks. Therefore they intentionally work to build a community that works together and learns to serve one other in the process. As leaders work with people within organizations they will serve them by displaying the qualities of Building Community (Laub, 1999).

Build relationships, Leaders and workers need the time and space to be together...to share, to listen, to reflect. They need to get to know one another. Work collaboratively, organizations don't allow the natural competitiveness between different individuals to characterize the atmosphere of the group. Leaders work alongside the others to model a dynamic partnership of collaborative work. Value differences, Leaders respect and celebrate differences in ethnicity, gender, age and culture. They are aware of their own prejudices and biases. They confront these boldly so that no individual or group feels less valued or set apart from the team (Laub, 1999).

**Display Authenticity:** Leaders are to be open, real, approachable and accountable to others. As leaders work with people within organizations they will serve them by displaying the qualities of Authenticity. Open & Accountable, Leaders will resist the tendency to protect themselves at all cost. When they make mistakes...they will admit them. They will recognize that they are accountable to others and not just those who are "over" them. People in a healthy organization can fully risk being open with each other due to the high levels of trust (Laub, 1999).

**Provides Leadership:** Leadership is described as Initiative, Influence and Impact. Leaders do not neglect to take appropriate action, in fact, they have a bias for action. This initiative-taking comes not from being driven to personal ambition but by being called to serve the highest needs of others. Envision the future, organizations are future oriented. They look ahead to envision what could be, and should be. The leaders recognize that they serve as partners with other leaders throughout the organization who also are looking ahead to the future. This organization shares their vision openly with the goal of creating a new and shared vision with others (Laub, 1999).

**Shares Leadership:** In these organizations the leader shares the power they have with others so that others can lead, thus increasing the potential influence and impact of the total organization. Share the vision, organizations know that the vision of an organization does not belong to a single leader. A clear vision of the future, shared by the entire group, becomes a powerful magnet drawing together all of the resources, skills and abilities of the total team. Share the power, Power has been described as the ability to do...to act. In organizational terms it represents the ability to make important decisions, allocate resources...moving people and projects forward to make things happen. Shared leadership empowers all people to act, for the good of the group and the mission of the organization. Share the status, Leadership is not position, status or prestige. Leaders in healthy organizations resist the strong tendency to accept the special perks and privileges of leadership position. They know that all people throughout the organization need to be affirmed and recognized for their inherent value and for what they contribute to the success of the whole (Laub, 1999). The literature review showed a lack of empirical research regarding servant leadership in the context of educational system in Jordan. The goal of the study is to discover the extent to which teachers perceived practice of Servant Leadership among school principals in Jordanian educational directorates.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Leaders implement differing theories of leadership to promote positive leader follower relationships within their organizations (Bass, 1990). One such theory is servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1970). This research study conducted a research analysis to determine the perceptions of the presence of principles of servant leadership among school principals as perceived by their teachers in Jordan.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this research study was to identify teachers perceived practice of Servant Leadership among school principals in Jordanian directorates of education.

The study provided data that potentially answers the following two research questions:

1. What were the levels of practice of servant leadership among school principals as perceived by their teachers in Jordanian directorates of education?
2. Are there any significant statistical differences among teachers perceived the level of practice of servant leadership of school principals related to their experience, and gender?

### **Significance of the Problem**

The empirical data gained from conducting this research study has the potential to contribute in resolving the concerns created by a lack of research in the area of servant leadership. The research conducted in the present study potentially will contribute empirical data aiding in practical application and theoretical discussions regarding servant leadership. Data produced from this research study can assist practitioners and scholars in several ways. First, the data gleaned from the present study can help to provide areas of emphasis for individuals responsible for developing leadership-training programs, thus making these leadership-training programs more cost effective. The data derived from the present research possesses the potential to supply support for or against the on-going efforts in researching the applicability of servant leadership within schools. Second, information from this study can grant additional insight into whether the degree an individual implements the principles of servant leadership has an impact on their own or others' level of morale or job satisfaction or job loyalty or other variables that support work within schools.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Servant Leadership*: Servant leadership is an approach to leadership and service whereby the leader is servant first and leader second (Stramba, 2003). Servant leadership encourages collaboration, trust, foresight, listening, and the ethical use of power and empowerment.

*Servant Leadership* is an understanding and practice of leadership that places the good of those led over the self-interest of the leader. Servant leadership promotes the valuing and development of people, the building of community, the practice of authenticity, the providing of leadership for the good of those led and the sharing of power and status for the common good of each individual, the total organization and those served by the organization (Laub, 1999).

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

This study was a quantitative study conducted through utilizing the Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA) research instrument (Laub, 1998) that has been shown to assess levels of servant leadership among school principals as perceived by their teachers within Jordanian directorates of education.

### **Population and Sampling of the Study**

The population involved with this study consists of the teachers who worked in Irbid directorates of education-Jordan. These schools utilizes 432 teachers. In gathering data from a random sample of these employees, various teachers were selected in a random manner and the leader of each school was contacted to coordinate administering the instrument. Data collection continued from randomly selected teachers until data had been obtained from at least the minimum number of respondents from the teachers.

### **Instrumentation**

The study used the OLA (Laub, 1998) ) with modifications to assess quantitatively the servant leadership principles implement by school principals as perceived by their teachers within Jordanian directorates of education.

### **Development of the OLA**

Laub (1999) developed the OLA through a Delphi investigation and then put the instrument through a broader field test for reliability and found a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .98. In the Delphi process, 54 characteristics of servant leaders were identified and eventually clustered into six key areas: (a) valuing people, (b) developing people, (c) building community, (d) displaying authenticity, (e) providing leadership, and (f) sharing leadership. The Cronbach-Alpha coefficients for each of the six constructs contained within the OLA instrument as follows: (a) valuing people (.91), (b) developing people (.90), (c) building community (.90), (d) displaying authenticity (.93), (e) providing leadership (.91), and (f) sharing leadership (.93).

### The Validity and Reliability of Instrument

Laub (1999) indicated the OLA instrument had a reliability of .98 and stated, the reliability of the instrument indicates it will be useful for further research in servant leadership. Horsman (2001), Thompson (2002), and Miers (2004) all found similarly high levels of reliability in conducting research using the OLA in different settings. For the purpose of examining the validity of the instrument it was presented to post-secondary education experts in educational administration. They were asked to check whether the statements in the instrument are clear and linked appropriately with the dimensions they were classified to them in advance. Instrument items were revised or removed based on panel member feedback. Regarding the reliability of the instrument a Test-Retest procedure was used, a pilot study had been conducted. Forty five teachers participated in the pilot study. Those teachers did not participate in the final study. Stability coefficients for the instrument in each case were 0.89, 0.85, 0.83, 0.91, 0.88 and 0.86 for the first, second, third, fourth, fifth and the sixth dimensions respectively, and 0.88 for the total OLA. These values can be considered reasonably satisfactory to support the objectives of the current study.

### Data Analysis

Using SPSS version 18 for Windows, several steps were involved in analysing the data provided by the participants. The first step involved the scoring of the OLA to attain sub-scores and a total score for servant leadership. Sub-scores were derived by summing the items for each scale and dividing by the number of items that make up each scale. Total scores were attained by adding the sub-scores of each scale. Subscales of servant leadership are: Values People, Develops People, Builds Community, Displays Authenticity, Provides Leadership, and Shares Leadership. Each of the questions is based on a five-point Likert scale, with a response of strongly disagree being given one point and a response of strongly agree given a point of five points. The total scores were interpreted as following: it should notice that the researcher used the response scale of each item which ranged from 1 to 5 to determine these cut points according to the following manner: less than 2.33- low, from 2.34 to 3.67-moderate, and 3.68 or above- high.

### Results and discussion of Study

**Research Question One:** What were the levels of practice of servant leadership among school principals as perceived by their teachers in Jordanian directorates of education?

The first question guiding this study sought to find the extent to which teachers perceived the level of practice of servant leadership among school principals, as measured by the Organizational Leadership Assessment (Laub, 1999). The OLA scores from the responses of all participants yielded a mean score of 3.54 (SD=.133).

Table 1 illustrates these data with high levels of practice for three categories of servant leadership. These Three categories comprised the scales that measured servant leadership; the mean score for builds community was 3.77 (SD, .325); the mean score for displays authenticity was 3.72 (SD, .205); and the mean score for shares leadership was 3.77 (SD, .243).

The other Three categories with moderate levels of practice that measured servant leadership are: the mean score for values others was 3.01 (SD, .302); the mean score for develops people was 3.33 (SD, .336 ); and the mean score for provides leaders was 3.62 (SD, .213).

Table 1: Means and SD of dimensions of servant leadership for school principals' as perceived by their teachers

Dimensions of Servant Leadership	Mean	SD
Value others	3.01	.302
Develops people	3.33	.336
Builds community	3.77	.325
Displays Authenticity	3.72	.205
Provides leaders	3.62	.213
Shares Leadership	3.77	.243
Total	3.54	.133

**Research Question Two:** Are there any significant statistical differences among teachers perceived the level of practice of servant leadership of school principals related to their sex, experience, and academic qualification?

A Three-Way MANOVA was used to test the faculty members perceived the level of practice of the six dimensions of servant leadership among academic administrators as related to their sex, experience, and academic qualification.

Table 2: Three-Way Multivariate Tests the teachers perceived the level of practice of the six dimensions of servant leadership among school principals as related to their sex, experience, and academic qualification

Effect	Wilks' Lambda Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Intercept	.001	73335.45	6.00	409	.000
sex	.968	2.268	6.00	409	.036*
Experience in teaching	.494	28.833	12.00	818.00	.000*
Academic qualification	.965	1.235	12.00	818.00	.254

\* <.05

The MANOVA results in Table 2 shows that there is difference in teachers perceived the level of practice of the six dimensions of servant leadership among school principals related to their sex and experience.

To assess the effect of Experience in teaching on teachers perceived the level of practice of the six dimensions of servant leadership among school principals . The omnibus F Test was statistically significant (F=2.268; df = 6; p<.000).

Univariate analysis test was conducted as follow-up test to assess the effect of sex (Male, Female) on teachers perceived the level of practice of the six dimensions of servant leadership among school principals (Provides leaderships, displays authenticity, shares leadership, develops others, builds community, and values others) see Table 3.

Table 3: ANOVA Summary for the teachers perceived the level of practice of the six dimensions of servant leadership among school principals Scores due to their sex

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
sex	Value others	.038	1	.038	.861	.354
	Develops people	.038	1	.038	.567	.452
	Builds community	.067	1	.067	1.079	.300
	Displays Authenticity	.004	1	.004	.178	.673
	Provides leaders	.017	1	.017	.508	.476
	Shares Leadership	.008	1	.008	.245	.621
	Total	.002	1	.002	.173	.678

\* <.05

Table 3 presents ANOVA results which indicate that teachers scores on six dimensions (Provides leaderships, displays authenticity, shares leadership, develops others, builds community, and values others) no significantly differ regarding to their sex.

To assess the effect of Experience in teaching on teachers perceived the level of practice of the six dimensions of servant leadership among school principals . The omnibus F Test was statistically significant (F=28.833; df = 12; p<.000).

Univariate analysis test was conducted as follow-up test to assess the effect of Experience in teaching (less 5 years, 5- less 10 years, and 10 years and over) on teachers perceived the level of practice of the six dimensions of servant leadership among school principals (Provides leaderships, displays authenticity, shares leadership, develops others, builds community, and values others) see Table 4.

Table 4: ANOVA Summary for the teachers perceived the level of practice of the six dimensions of servant leadership among school principals Scores due to Experience in Teaching

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Experience in teaching	Value others	16.391	2	8.195	184.668	.061
	Develops people	15.340	2	7.670	113.348	.000*
	Builds community	15.517	2	7.759	125.560	.000*
	Displays Authenticity	6.393	2	3.197	130.700	.059
	Provides leaders	4.153	2	2.077	62.611	.101
	Shares Leadership	9.008	2	4.504	133.302	.071
	Total	1.593	2	.797	59.751	.082

\* <.05

Table 4 presents ANOVA results which indicate that teachers scores (develops others and builds community) significantly differ for their experience in teaching. To assess pairwise differences among the levels of Experience in teaching for *teachers*, the Scheffe procedures ( $p = .00$ ) was performed (Table 5).

Table 5: *Scheffe Multiple Comparisons for teachers* perceived the level of practice of the six dimensions of servant leadership among school principals Scores (develops others and builds community) *Regarding Their Experience in teaching*

Dependent Variable	(I) experience	(J) experience	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Develops others	less 5	5-less 10	-.2939*	.02414	.000
		10+	.2976*	.03077	.000
	5-less 10	less 5	-.5391*	.03201	.000
		10+	-.2415*	.02981	.000
	10+	less 5	-.2976*	.03077	.000
		5-less 10	.2415*	.02981	.000
Builds community	less 5	5-less 10	-.5398*	.03059	.000
		10+	-.2897*	.02940	.000
	5-less 10	less 5	.5398*	.03059	.000
		10+	.2502*	.02848	.000
	10+	less 5	.2897*	.02940	.000
		5-less 10	-.2502*	.02848	.000

The results in Table 6 indicate that in “develops others” with short teaching experience ( $M=3.62$ ) differ significantly from teachers with long teaching experience ( $M=3.32$ ), and with medium teaching experience ( $M=3.29$ ). That means teachers who have short number of years of teaching experiences perceived the level of practice of “develops others” among school principals higher than other teachers with a medium and high number of years of teaching experience.

Also, the results in Table 6 indicate that in “builds community” with medium teaching experience ( $M=4.02$ ) differ significantly from teachers with long teaching experience ( $M=3.77$ ), and with short teaching experience ( $M=3.48$ ). That means teachers who have medium number of years of teaching experiences perceived the level of practice of “builds community” among school principals higher than other teachers with a short and high number of years of teaching experience.

Table 6: Means and Standard Deviations for the teachers Teaching Experience

Dependent Variable	Experience	Mean	SD
Develops others	less 5	3.62	.110
	5-less 10	3.29	.168
	10+	3.32	.312
Builds community	less 5	3.48	.152
	5-less 10	4.02	.224
	10+	3.77	.317

The MANOVA results in Table 3 shows that there is difference in teachers perceived the level of practice of the six dimensions of servant leadership among school principals related to their academic qualifications.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

This findings of study data could potentially assist individuals in improving leader-follower relationships through increased training in the practice of servant leadership. Promoting servant leadership on a will allow a greater number of leaders to realize the benefits of using servant leadership in leading their organization and developing of employees who are increasingly satisfied with their careers.

Findings of study may prompt action from both key stakeholders in the study and scholars in the field of servant leadership. In light of the data suggesting administrators within the Educational System responsible for leadership training would benefit from providing training in the principles of servant leadership. This training could potentially improve administrators' leadership skills that could in turn raise individual job satisfaction of all employees.

Further research is recommended to conduct similar studies within populations involving different education sectors in order to verify the claim that servant leadership is grounded in basic education standards.

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### APPENDIXES

#### APPENDIX: ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT

##### General Instructions:

Please provide your response to each statement by placing an X in one of the five boxes

**Strongly Disagree (1)**, **Disagree (2)**, **Undecided (3)**, **Agree (4)**, and **Strongly Agree (5)**

	Items	SD	D	U	A	SA
1	Trust each other					
2	Are clear on the key goals of the organization					
3	Are non-judgmental – they keep an open mind					
4	Respect each other					
5	Know where this organization is headed in the future					
6	Maintain high ethical standards					
7	Work well together in teams					
8	Value differences in culture, race & ethnicity					
9	Are caring & compassionate towards each other					

10	Demonstrate high integrity & honesty					
11	Are trustworthy					
12	Relate well to each other					
13	Attempt to work with others more than working on their own					
14	Are held accountable for reaching work goals					
15	Are aware of the needs of others					
16	Allow for individuality of style and expression					
17	Are encouraged by supervisors to share in making important decisions					
18	Work to maintain positive working relationships					
19	Accept people as they are					
20	View conflict as an opportunity to learn & grow					
21	Know how to get along with people					
22	Communicate a clear vision of the future of the organization					
23	Are open to learning from those who are <i>below</i> them in the organization					
24	Allow workers to help determine where this organization is headed					
25	Work alongside the workers instead of separate from them					
26	Use persuasion to influence others instead of coercion or force					
27	Don't hesitate to provide the leadership that is needed					
28	Promote open communication and sharing of information					
29	Give workers the power to make <i>important</i> decisions					
30	Provide the support and resources needed to help workers meet their goals					
31	Create an environment that encourages learning					
32	Are open to receiving criticism & challenge from others					
33	Say what they mean, and mean what they say					
34	Encourage each person to exercise leadership					
35	Admit personal limitations & mistakes					
36	Encourage people to take risks even if they may fail					
37	Practice the same behavior they expect from others					
38	Facilitate the building of community & team					
39	Do not demand special recognition for being leaders					
40	Lead by example by modelling appropriate behaviour					
41	Seek to influence others from a positive relationship rather than from the authority of their position					
42	Provide opportunities for all workers to develop to their full potential					
43	Honestly evaluate themselves before seeking to evaluate others					
44	Use their power and authority to benefit the workers					
45	Take appropriate action when it is needed					
46	Build people up through encouragement and affirmation					
47	Encourage workers to work <i>together</i> rather than competing against each other					
48	Are humble – they do not promote themselves					
49	Communicate clear plans & goals for the organization					
50	Provide mentor relationships in order to help people grow professionally					
51	Are accountable & responsible to others					
52	Are receptive listeners					
53	Do not seek after special status or the “perks” of leadership					
54	Put the needs of the workers ahead of their own					