THE STATUS OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP, ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT, AND ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR: A CASE STUDY OF STATE OWNED HEI'S IN SOUTHERN ETHIOPIA.

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Abstract

Servant leadership is a holistic leadership strategy that emphasizes follower growth in the areas of ethics, reason, emotion, relationships, and spirituality. A measure of an employee's identification with the organization's aims and guiding principles, how much the company trusts in them, and how hard they work to remain a part of it is also reflected in their organizational commitment. A case study of state-owned HEI's in Southern Ethiopia aims to assess the condition of servant leadership, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior. The design inquiry method systematically addresses both qualitative and quantitative elements using a mixed methods research approach. For administrative purposes, the research was carried out at two institutions that were chosen from a particular layer. They were Wolayita Sodo University and Dilla University. The two universities then choose eight colleges altogether at random. In particular, a simple lottery system, which is primarily a random sampling approach, selected four candidates from Wolayita Sodo University and Dilla University. Stratified random sampling is used to choose 242 trainers out of a pool of 611. Primary and secondary data sources are included in this study. The main data were gathered using semi-structured interviews and organized questionnaires, while the secondary data were derived from books, periodicals, and papers about the servant's leadership, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) were used to analyze the study. Although there is some degree of rapport and attachment between respondents, there may be room for improvement in promoting a greater sense of commitment and personal meaning. Generally speaking, the data reveals respondents who actively promote collaboration, knowledge sharing, and problem-solving in their workplace. It also demonstrates a firm dedication to helping coworkers.

Key Words: Servant Leadership, Organizational Commitment, Organizational Citizenship Behavior, Higher Education Institutions

1. Introduction

According to Eva et al. (2019), servant leadership is a holistic leadership strategy that emphasizes follower growth in the areas of ethics, reason, emotion, relationships, and spirituality. The concept places a strong emphasis on a people-oriented leadership approach that considers the particular needs and preferences of every worker. Servant leaders put their employees' needs first and help their companies create a friendly environment where employees feel a sense of loyalty to the company (Kaya & Karatepe, 2020). Within this context, servant leaders prioritize the personal

development of their followers, delegate authority to them, and communicate expectations regarding their behavior on behalf of the organization (Jaramillo et al., 2009). In addition, organizational commitment (OC) is one work-related result that has been researched. Employees stay at work and are completely dedicated to the company's goals and objectives. The extent to which an employee identifies with the goals and ideals of the company, the degree to which the company adheres to them, and the amount of work they put in to remain a member of it are all measured by OC. Additionally, numerous researchers have been drawn to OCB's diverse nature, which includes work-related notions. It is an open-ended property that neither job descriptions nor incentive systems allow, yet it encourages well-functioning organizations (Hoffman, Blair, Meriac, & Woehr, 2007; Williams & Anderson, 1991). Altruism, conscience, citizenship, athleticism, and civility are his five aspects of his OCB (Organ, 1988). Simply put, altruism means a willingness to help colleagues in the performance of their work, and conscience means requiring employees to go beyond their duties and voluntarily perform organizational functions. Civic virtues include actions that demonstrate a high level of dedication to an organization by offering solutions to its problems. Courtesy is to be kind to your colleagues, while sportsmanship is an employee's choice to maintain a positive attitude at work even when they dislike something. A case study of state-owned higher education institutions in Southern Ethiopia is used in the research to examine the state of servant leadership, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Servant Leadership

Servant leadership is a leadership philosophy that emphasizes serving others, fostering a supportive work environment, and prioritizing the needs of employees and stakeholders. This leadership style has gained significant attention in organizational research due to its positive impact on employee engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Several studies have explored the concept of servant leadership and its implications for organizations. Eva et al. (2019) conducted a systematic review of servant leadership literature, analyzing over 285 articles published between 1998 and 2018. Their study provides conceptual clarity, evaluates existing servant leadership measures, and outlines future research directions.

Canavesi and Minelli (2022) examined servant leadership through a systematic literature review and network analysis. Their research highlights the moral foundation of servant leadership and its role in enhancing job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Van Dierendonck (2011) synthesized servant leadership literature, presenting a conceptual model that identifies key characteristics such as empowerment, humility, authenticity, and stewardship. His study emphasizes the importance of trust and fairness in fostering positive job attitudes and performance.

2.2 Organizational commitment

Organizational commitment refers to an employee's psychological attachment to their organization, influencing their willingness to remain and contribute to its success. It is often categorized into three dimensions: affective commitment (emotional attachment), continuance commitment (cost-based attachment), and normative commitment (obligation-based attachment).

Several studies have examined organizational commitment and its impact on workplace outcomes: Mercurio (2015) conducted an integrative literature review emphasizing affective commitment as the core essence of organizational commitment. His study highlights how emotional attachment significantly influences employee retention and performance. Vandenberghe (2009) explored various macro-level foci of organizational commitment, including commitment to the organization, profession, and union. His research provides insights into how different types of commitment affect work behavior. Ghosh & Swamy (2014) provided a comprehensive summary of organizational commitment literature, tracing its evolution over five decades. Their study categorizes different theoretical approaches and highlights gaps in existing research. Organizational commitment remains a critical driver of employee retention and performance. While affective commitment is most desirable, organizations must address normative and continuance commitment through ethical leadership, job design, and cultural interventions.

2.3 Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Organizational Citizenship Behavior refers to voluntary, discretionary actions by employees that go beyond their formal job requirements to benefit the organization. These behaviors contribute to a positive work environment and enhance overall organizational effectiveness. Furthermore, some categorize the organization as focusing on organizational goals and the OCB aspect as focusing on individual goals. This study focuses on five common aspects of OCB developed by Organ (1988), although there is little agreement on other aspects. These aspects are altruism, honesty, sportsmanship, civility, and civic virtues. Since this model is more commonly used than others, each dimension is described below. Key Aspects of OCB

- Altruism: helping colleagues without expecting anything in return.
- Courtesy: being considerate and polite in workplace interactions.
- Conscientiousness: going above and beyond job expectations.
- Sportsmanship: maintaining a positive attitude even in challenging situations.
- Civic Virtue: actively participating in organizational affairs and improvements.

OCB is often linked to higher employee morale, teamwork, and productivity, making it a valuable aspect of workplace culture. OCB remains a critical construct in organizational behavior, evolving with workplace trends. While leadership and justic are key drivers, researchers must address cultural, technological, and well-being implications in future studies.

3. Material and Method

An exploratory research design is used to measure the Status of Servant Leadership, Organizational Commitment, and Organizational Citizenship Behavior: A Case Study of State Owned HEI's in Southern Ethiopia. Using a mixed methods research approach, the design inquiry methodically addresses both qualitative and quantitative aspects.

3.1 Sampling Procedure

The study conducted at two universities selected from a given stratum for administrative reasons. They were Dilla University and Wolayita Sodo University. Then, eight colleges in total are chosen at random from the two universities. Particularly, four each from Wolayita Sodo University and Dilla University were chosen by a straightforward random sampling method, primarily a lottery. From a total of 611 trainers, 242 are selected using stratified random sampling. This research includes both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, and secondary data were obtained from books, magazines, and articles on the servant's leadership, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior.

3.2 Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative data analyses techniques were used to analyze the data. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26 was used to analyze the quantitative data using descriptive techniques. Descriptive statistics are employed to condense data methodically by explaining the status among factors in a target sample. Computing descriptive statistics signifies an essential stage when doing research and should continuously happen and the key objective of employing descriptive statistics is to explain and encapsulate the characteristics of sample respondents. It is subjected to descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation).

4. Result and Discussion

This part focus on data analysis and presentation of empirical results of the study and reports the statistical analysis results obtained from survey data for the study with demographic characteristics of sample respondents, status of servant leadership, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior.

Table 4.1 Descriptive data analysis on emotional healing

Items	Valid N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
EH1	242	1	5	3.44	1.148
EH2	242	1	5	3.47	1.094
EH3	242	1	5	2.92	1.096
EH4	242	1	5	3.10	1.165

Source: Primary data, 2024

As stated in Table 4.1 a moderate level of willingness to seek help from their department head for personal problems, with a mean score of 3.44 and a standard deviation of 1.148. The variability indicates that while many might feel comfortable seeking help, others may remain hesitant. A mean score of 3.47 (standard deviation: 1.094) reflects overall positivity in perceptions of department heads caring for employees' personal well-being. This demonstrates that leadership is, for the most part, meeting expectations in this area. The ability of department heads to recognize emotional

distress without inquiry was rated lower, with a mean score of 2.92 and a standard deviation of 1.096. This suggests that improvements could be made to develop more emotional awareness and support among leaders. Immediate leaders scored 3.10 (standard deviation: 1.165) in their ability to take time for personal-level conversations. This finding underscores an opportunity to strengthen personal connections between employees and their immediate leaders. According to Eva and Sendjaya (2023), it was discovered that "relational pauses" enhance quality connections by 41%. The elevated SD suggests varying relationship-building practices among leaders. Overall, the analysis reveals moderately positive sentiments regarding leadership's engagement in employees' personal well-being. However, the data points to specific areas for improvement, such as emotional recognition and fostering personal communication. Addressing these gaps could lead to a more supportive and empathetic work environment, enhancing employee satisfaction and morale.

Table 4.2 Descriptive data analysis on affective commitment

Items	Valid N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
AC1	242	1	5	2.86	1.212
AC2	242	1	5	3.03	1.184
AC3	242	1	5	3.12	1.236
AC4	242	1	5	3.09	1.234
AC5	242	1	5	3.00	1.217
AC6	242	1	5	2.99	1.267

Source: Primary data, 2024

As stated in Table 4.2 the lowest mean score of 2.86 (standard deviation 1.212) indicates that respondents are less inclined to envision spending the rest of their career at the university. Opinions are varied, as reflected in the standard deviation. A mean of 3.03 and standard deviation of 1.184 suggests moderate agreement, with respondents showing some sense of ownership over the university's issues. With a mean of 3.12 (standard deviation 1.236), respondents moderately agree that they feel a sense of belonging, though variability in responses is evident. The mean score of 3.09 (standard deviation 1.234) indicates a similar level of emotional connection to the university. A mean of 3.00 (standard deviation 1.217) shows moderate agreement with this sentiment, though it's slightly lower than "belongingness" and "emotional attachment." Scoring a mean of 2.99 (standard deviation 1.267), this aspect highlights mixed perceptions regarding the university's significance in respondents' lives, with the highest variability across responses. Meyer (2022) discovered that servant leadership enhances intended duration of stay, indicating that present ratings might indicate insufficiently developed servant leadership practices. Overall, while there is a moderate sense of connection and attachment among respondents, there may be opportunities for improvement in fostering stronger commitment and personal meaning.

Table 4.3 Descriptive data analysis on altruism

Items	Valid N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Altruism1	242	1	5	3.33	1.077
Altruism2	242	1	5	3.50	1.020
Altruism3	242	1	5	3.55	1.006
Altruism4	242	1	5	3.67	.941
Altruism5	242	1	5	3.69	1.027

Source: Primary data, 2024

As indicated in Table 4.3 with a mean of 3.33 and a standard deviation of 1.077, respondents moderately agree that they actively help colleagues adjust to the work environment, though there's noticeable variability in the responses. A mean of 3.50 (standard deviation 1.020) indicates a relatively stronger agreement about efforts to mediate and resolve conflicts among instructors. This aspect scores a mean of 3.55 with the lowest standard deviation of 1.006, reflecting a consistent and positive perception of respondents' willingness to help with work-related challenges. Strong agreement regarding actively sharing knowledge with colleagues is demonstrated by a higher mean of 3.67 (standard deviation .941). This also has the least variability, suggesting consistent behavior. The highest mean of 3.69 (standard deviation 1.027) reflects very positive perceptions of efforts to assist colleagues in achieving optimal work performance. This review explores altruism as a selfless act that reduces one's own fitness to increase another's. It examines altruism through universal and culturally relevant frameworks, highlighting its role in human cooperation and societal organization (Shin, J. 2023). Overall, the data paints a picture of respondents who actively contribute to fostering collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and problem-solving within their workplace. It also highlights a strong commitment to supporting colleagues.

5. Conclusion

The analysis reveals moderately positive sentiments regarding leadership's engagement in employees' personal well-being. The figures suggest department head that is perceived as positively contributing to community-oriented initiatives, though there is some range in how consistently these behaviors are noticed. These insights present a picture of a leader who demonstrates strengths in understanding institutional goals and fostering creative problem-solving, with some room for growth in identifying and addressing work-related challenges. In general, the report suggests room for improvement in the department head's perceived altruistic leadership behaviors, while their support for making employees' work easier is viewed more favorably. While there is a moderate sense of connection and attachment among respondents, there may be opportunities for improvement in fostering stronger commitment and personal meaning. The data suggests that necessity and investment in the university play a larger role in respondents' reasons for staying, while feelings of disruption or constraints on leaving are less prominent. These responses indicate relatively low to moderate levels of obligation, loyalty, and emotional

attachment to the university. This could signal opportunities for fostering stronger commitment or engagement. Overall, the data paints a picture of respondents who actively contribute to fostering collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and problem-solving within their workplace. It also highlights a strong commitment to supporting colleagues.

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