

# RELATIONSHIP AMONG PRINCIPAL SERVANT LEADERSHIP, SCHOOL ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE AND TEACHERS' JOB INVOLVEMENT OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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## ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze the correlation among principal servant leadership, school organizational climate and teachers' job involvement of elementary school. After analyzing related literature, it is found that demographic variables like gender and age difference in perception of teachers' job involvement. In addition, if principal servant leadership and school organizational climate has correlation with teachers' job involvement as well. In order to accomplish the research purpose, this study extracted 1582 elementary school teacher as the research subjects to conduct the Principal Servant Leadership Scale, School Organizational Climate Scale, and Teachers' Job Involvement scale. The three scales have all been pretested, and have good reliability and validity. We analyzed the collected effective questionnaire data with hierarchical regression. The results show: 1. The explanatory power of principal servant leadership for teachers' job involvement is 46.40%, 2. The explanatory power of school organizational climate for teachers' job involvement is 13.00%.

**Keywords:** Principal servant leadership, teachers' job involvement, school organizational climate.

## INTRODUCTION

The principal servant leadership, school organizational climate, and teachers' job involvement are the crucial factor for individual and school development. Principal servant leadership stems from servant leadership, was introduced in 1970 by Greenleaf entitled *The Servant as Leader*, emphasized the importance of a leader's motivation to serve or to lead as an identification of servant leadership (Black, 2010). Greenleaf (2002) considered that service leadership is to prioritize others' demand, ambition, and interest to those of the leader. Besides, service-type leader endeavors to transform his followers, making them grow as individuals, becoming "healthier, wiser, more autonomous, and influence them to serve others as well. Some research like Hsieh and Lai's (2012) target at Taiwan 568 junior high school teachers to conduct a survey, finding that there is a positive relationships among principals' servant leadership, teachers' organizational citizenship behavior and teachers' teaching effectiveness, and the former two variables can predict latter. On the other side, Huang and Shen (2014) adopted Taiwan 349 Junior High Schools teachers and 33 principals as the subject, also finding that there is a significantly positive correlation between principals' service leadership and teachers' positive emotions, a positive correlation between principals'

service leadership and school life adjustment, and a negative correlation between principals' service leadership work stress. Moreover, as Cerit (2009), Al-Mahdy, Al-Harthi, & Salah El-Din (2016) found, principals' service leadership is significantly positive correlative with teachers' job satisfaction. From all mentioned above, it is proved that as the principal becomes more capable of serving and leading, teachers' organizational citizenship behavior and teachers' teaching effectiveness teachers' positive emotions, job satisfaction and school life adjustment will be higher, and work stress will be lower.

The earliest organizational climate studies can be dated back to 1930's when Kurt Lewin published "field theory" to describe the psychological atmosphere aroused by the dynamic relationship between human behaviors and the general environment. To apply organizational climate to school, it is called school organizational climate, referring to a constant trait of the school that will affect students' behaviors and distinguish from other schools, while it is also a kind of teachers' and students' feelings for the school (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1983). If principal effort in improving their schools' climate, that can improved school's overall efficacy, student achievement (Halawah, 2005), school violence (Khoury-Kassabri, Benbenishty, & Astor, 2005), and school reform (Kelley, Thornton, & Daugherty, 2005).

Job involvement is an employee's job related significant behaviour. It shows the degree to which an individual is personally involved with his job. The credit of introducing the concept of job involvement goes to Lodahl and Kejner in 1965(Sethi & Mittal, 2016). Research found a significant impact of job involvement on employee performance (Carmeli & Freund, 2004; Diefendorff, Richard, & Gosserand, 2006; Posthuma & Campion, 2005) and citizenship behaviors(Rotenberry & Moberg, 2007). It may reduce turnover intentions, absence behavior, and/or turnover (Cohen, 2000; Hackett, Lapierre, & Hausdorf, 2001), increase teacher retention and satisfaction (de Barona & Barona, 2006).

From what mentioned above, it is learned that principal servant leadership, school organizational climate and teachers' job involvement are important to the school development or the teachers' individual psychological development. Also, from the literature, it shows the association among the three, as described below:

### **Principal servant leadership Affect Teachers' Job Involvement**

Principal servant leadership means principals adopt behaviors includes ethical behavior, helping subordinates to grow, empowerment and the creation of value for the community (Greenleaf, 1977), or as Spears (1995) and Reinke (2004) claimed the key principles of servant-leadership philosophy are: Listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to growth or people, and building community. Also, Patterson(2003) asserted servant leaders have sincere concern for followers' needs. If teachers perceived these behaviors from the principal, it will help the teachers' job involvement. As Yukl ( 2002) considered that through listening, the leader can understand the members true thoughts and demands in order to help them solve the problem. Meanwhile, as Wu (2004) proposed that "stewardship" refers to the leader's selfless contributions, regretless services, and silent endeavors without asking for repay. Covey (2002) even asserted that persuasion is helpful to establish consensus. Sergiovanni (2000) pointed out that in applying to school, community is composed by a group of people who share common commitment, faith, and values, and it is the core of the organization. To set up the relationship with the community can foster the harmonious organizational atmosphere,

develop partnership relationship, and respect one another, and participate together. Therefore, listening, stewardship, persuasion, community can help teachers solve problems.

### **Principal Servant Leadership Affects School Organizational Climate**

Research explored the relationship between secondary principals' servant leadership and school climate (Anderson, 2005; Lambert, 2004; Miers, 2004). And Black(2010) randomly selected sample of 231 full-time teachers and 15 principals to complete questionnaire. And Black's study revealed that there is a significant positive correlation between servant leadership and school climate. But we assume that principal servant leadership affects school organizational climate, for a critical factor to understanding the success of an organization, then, is to study its leaders (Parris & Peachey, 2013), because he/she can create a organizational vision, articulate it to the followers, and guide the organization into new a direction (Banutu-Gomez& Banutu-Gomez 2007), by modeling and promoting a positive instructional learning environment, the principal is able to influence positively the school's climate(Black, 2010).Therefore, principal servant leadership affects school organizational climate.

### **School Organizational Climate affects Teachers' Job Involvement**

Wiggins (1975), Fisher (2003), Hoy and Miskel (2013) all consider that school organizational climate is the outcome of social interaction between the principal and the teachers, which affects the individual's behaviors. According to Hoy and Clover's (1986) school organizational climate perspective, the principal should show care, respect, assistance, and support to the teachers, such as listening to their opinions and opening communication channels, appreciating the teachers, offering constructive comments; or the teachers should show friendliness to one another, such as instructing the coworkers, and supporting one another, conduct professional interaction, respecting and accept the coworkers' professional abilities. Therefore, school organizational climate affects teachers' job involvement.

### **Gender and age affect job involvement**

This research adopted teachers' job involvement as the dependent variable. In addition to the influence of principal servant leadership and school organizational climate, it is affect by the Gender and age. As Lee (1996) , and Ye and Wu's (2010) investigated Taiwan teachers, the result revealed that there is a significant difference in the job involvement, and the male is higher than female. But Sethi and Mittal'(2016) study reveled that there is no significant difference in the job involvement of male and female senior secondary school teachers. Besides, Huang (2008) verified that teachers with different ages do not have significant difference in job involvement, but Ye and Wu's (2010) study found that teachers more than 51 years old have higher perception extent, proving that gender and age do not have empirical evidences on influencing teachers' job involvement yet.

To sum up, in discussing the relationship of principal servant leadership, school organizational climate, and teachers' job involvement, the studies adopted product-moment correlation. This statistical method cannot analyze two independent variables simultaneously, so this study adopted a hierarchy regression analysis to explore the explanatory power of principal servant leadership and school organizational climate for teachers' job involvement. And hierarchy regression analysis must be based on literature, theory, and reasonable phenomena to pre-decide the hierarchical relationship of the variables and the order to enter

the model (Chiu, 2010). Since demographic variables took place earliest, they were placed at the first block (model 1). Besides, principal servant leadership affects school organizational climate, so the principal servant leadership is placed in the second block (model 2), school organizational climate in the third block (model 3).

## METHODOLOGY

The research adopted questionnaire investigation, in analyzing the relationship among principal servant leadership, school organizational climate and teachers' job involvement. In this section, we mainly allocated the research subjects, tested the research tools, and processed and analyzed data as what follows:

### Research Subject

The samples come from teachers in public primary school in Kaohsiung City (excluding private or special schools) as the research population. And we adopted purposive sampling( $N=1582$ ), Male is 528( 33.4%), Female is 1054(66.6%). The teachers' average age is  $M=41.33$ ,  $SD=6.64$ .

### Pretest Results of the Research Tools

This study adopted three questionnaire which compiled by authors, and pretest( $N=120$ ) by item analysis, factor analysis and reliability. The results are as following:

#### Principal Servant Leadership Scale

In regard of item analysis, the  $t$  values are between 8.39 to 14.51, all reach significant level ( $p<.001$ ). In regard of factor analysis, we divided principal servant leadership into two factors: 1. Democracy and Sincerity: refers to the principal can understand the members' ideas and feelings through listening. Through rational communication, different opinions and voices can be delivered, and the members' can understand each other so as to dissolve divergent opinions. The items are like "When we discuss an issue, the principal can open his/her heart to listen to our opinions." 2. Service and Community: refers to the principal create an opportunity for the members to bring their strengths to a full play in order to set up a community, and help the members solve problems with true heart and serving attitude. The items are like "the Principal positively seek for resources to support our teacher's professional communities."

There are totally 20 items in the scale.  $\lambda S$  are between .57 to .88 , the total validity is 81.62 % , and the total reliability is .98.

#### School Organizational Climate Scale

In regard of item analysis, the  $t$  values are between 7.38 to 10.35, all reaching significant level ( $p<.001$ ). In regard of factor analysis, we divided principal servant leadership into three factors: 1. The principal's supportive behaviors: the principal's caring, respecting, assisting, and supporting conducts for the teacher. In other words, they listen to the teachers' opinions, and open communication channels. The items include "the principal can timely encourage and praise the teachers." 2. The teachers' friendly behaviors: refers to teachers' supporting one another, conduct professional interaction, respecting and accept the coworkers'

professional abilities. The items include “teachers can care each other’s family condition and daily affairs.” 3. The teachers’ colleague behaviors: indicate the teachers should be proud of the school, such as actively participating the school affairs and activities, agreeable to help the peers to solve problems, positively seek for professional efficacy and trainings, and provide powerful support and assistance. The items include “When teachers are working, they show highly cooperative spirit.”

There are totally 15 items in the scale.  $\lambda S$  are between .48 to .87, the total validity is 73.91 %. Regarding reliability, the total reliability is .94.

### **Teachers’ Job Involvement Scale**

In regard of item analysis, the  $t$  values are between 3.91 to 12.35, all reach significant level ( $p < .001$ ). In regard of factor analysis, we divided principal servant leadership into three factors: 1. Job focus: refers to a kind of the extent of responsible, earnest, and positive participative attitudes, about teacher’s willingness to pay more time, spirit, and physical strength to school’s educational work. The items are like “I can wholeheartedly accomplish the tasks assigned by the school.” 2. Jon identification: refers to the teachers take the school’s educational work goal as his/her own responsibilities, it is the extent of the teachers’ willingness of positive contribution and doing his/her best to the school’s educational work. The items are like “I feel I am suitable to work as a teacher.” 3. Work interest: refers to the the extent of teachers’ gaining pleasures and fully bringing his/her own strengths to a play in the school’s educational work. The items are like “I can participate in school related teaching activities, and enjoy it.”

There are totally 10 items in the scale,  $\lambda S$  are between .66 to .92, the total validity is 75.58 %, and the total reliability is .87.

### **Data Process and Analysis**

#### **Conduct hierarchical regression analysis**

This research conducts hierarchical regression analysis by SPSS 23.0. It is divided into 3 models: Model 1: The demographical variables have difference in teachers’ job involvement, and such variables took place in sample at the very beginning. In hierarchal regression, they are treated as the control variables in order to control the impact of the external factors (Chiu, 2010). Model 2: Principal servant leadership affects teachers’ job involvement before than school organizational climate, so principal servant leadership put into equation after control variables. Model 3: The last one into the equation is school organizational climate.

#### **Control variables to dummy**

Among the control variables in this study, gender is nominal variables, so we employed dummy coding. The male gender is dummied as 0 and female as 1. And age is ratio variables, so they were put into the equation directly. In addition, the dimension of independent variable and the dependent variable (total score of teachers’ job involvement) are ratio variables, so they entered the equation with the row score.



## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

Regarding Model 1, it is mainly composed by gender and age (see Table 3). Model 1's  $R^2 = .003$ ,  $F = 2.663$ , and  $p = .007$ , presenting such demographic variables have significant explanatory power for teachers' job involvement, only age achieved significant difference ( $\beta = .054$ ,  $t = 2.158$ ,  $p = .031$ ), the  $\beta$  is positive, that means the more age, the more teachers' job involvement.

Concerning Model 2, after controlling the gender and age's explanatory power, we thrust aspects of principal servant leadership to the equation. The model's explanatory power is  $R^2 = .467$ ,  $F = 345.387$ ,  $p = .000$ , showing Model 2 has explanatory power. As for  $\Delta R^2 = .464$ ,  $\Delta F = 169.366$ , and  $p = .000$ , showing that after thrust each aspect of principal servant leadership, increment of model 2 has statistical meaning; that is, each aspect of principal servant leadership can contribute extra 46.40%'s explanatory power.

From the two aspects, Service and Leadership ( $\beta = .552$ ,  $t = 12.074$ ,  $p = .000$ ), Democracy and Sincerity ( $\beta = .144$ ,  $t = 3.149$ ,  $p = .002$ ), Both aspects have significant explanatory power,  $\beta$  values are all positive, showing that the more the Service and Leadership and Democracy and Sincerity, the better teachers' job involvement will be.

After controlling the explanatory power of Model 1 and 2, aspects of school organizational climate were thrust into Model 3, and obtained the explanatory power  $R^2 = .597$ ,  $F = 333.163$ , and  $p = .000$ , showing Model 3 has explanatory power. As for  $\Delta R^2 = .13$ ,  $\Delta F = 169.336$ , and  $p = .000$ , the increment of model 3 has a statistic meaning that can contribute extra 13% of explanatory power.

From the three aspects, The principal's supportive behaviors ( $\beta = .252$ ,  $t = 6.052$ ,  $p = .000$ ). The teachers' friendly behaviors ( $\beta = .080$ ,  $t = 2.943$ ,  $p = .003$ ) and The teachers' colleague behaviors ( $\beta = .338$ ,  $t = 12.125$ ,  $p = .000$ ) have significant explanatory power,  $\beta$  values are all positive, showing that the more the principal's supportive behaviors, the teachers' friendly behaviors, and the teachers' colleague behaviors, the better teachers' job involvement will be.

**Table 3.** Summary of hierarchical regression

Dependent variable (teachers' job involvement)									
Model 1 Control variable (gender and age)				Model 2 Independent variable (principal servant leadership)			Model 3 Independent variable (school organizational climate)		
	$\beta$	$t$	$p$	$\beta$	$t$	$p$	$\beta$	$t$	$p$
(Constant)		37.365	.000		22.138	.000		12.522	.000
Gender	-.018	-.718	.473	.058	3.128	.002	.055	3.429	.001
Age	.054	2.158	.031	.018	.992	.321	.041	2.526	.012
Democracy and Sincerity,				.144	3.149	.002	.092	2.231	.026

Service and Community	.552	12.074	.000	.133	2.679	.007
Principal's supportive behaviors				.252	6.052	.000
Teachers' friendly behaviors				.080	2.943	.003
Teachers' colleague behaviors				.338	12.125	.000
Model abstract						
$R^2$	.003		.467			.597
$F$	2.663		345.387			333.163
$p$	.007		.000			.000
$\Delta R^2$	.003		.464			.130
$\Delta F$	2.663		685.801			169.366
$P$ of change	.007		.000			.000

## DISCUSSION

For control variable's explanatory power for teachers' job involvement, when demographic variables are put into Model 1, the results show that such demographic variables have significant explanatory power, but it is low, only .30%. However, only age reached significant difference, and the  $\beta$  value is positive, which means the higher the age, the more job involvement they are. When the possible reason may lie in age, as the subject are older, they will be even more enthusiastic at education. In Taiwan, teachers working in schools under high schools will retire around 50 years old due to the ongoing educational reform here. Regardless of curriculum variation, or the students' learning attitudes, the parents' respectful attitudes are not as they showed in the past, which is why only those teachers with highly enthusiasm at education can overcome such unfavorable situation and demonstrate highly teachers' job involvement.

Model 2 is about principal servant leadership 's explanatory power for teachers' job involvement, following control variable's explanatory power for teachers' job involvement, it is found that principal servant leadership has explanatory power for teachers' job involvement as well; the explanatory increment increases 46.70%. Among them, "Democracy and Sincerity" and "Service and Community" have the explanatory power, and their  $\beta$  values are both positive. Namely, the higher the Democracy and Sincerity and Service and Community, the higher teachers' job involvement will be. And the Service and Community has a stronger explanatory power than Democracy and Sincerity. This research results get along with some researchers' perspectives, as Yukl ( 2002) thinks that when the leader can understand the members true thoughts and needs, they can give them a hand and enhance teachers' job involvement. Also, as Wu Ching-shan (2004) thinks, the principal's selfless contributions and regretless service are also helpful to teachers' job involvement. Moreover, Sergiovanni (2000) pointed out that if the school can advise the professional community, he/she will be able to foster the harmonious organizational climate, develop partnership, respect one another, and enhance teachers' job involvement.

Model 3 is about school organizational climate's explanatory power for teachers' job involvement, following control variable's of Gender, age and principal servant leadership for teachers' job involvement, it is found that school organizational climate can contribute to extra 13% of explanatory power for teachers' job involvement, showing that Three aspects of school organizational climate, principal's supportive behaviors, the teachers' friendly behaviors, and the teachers' colleagues' behaviors can explain teachers' job involvement. and their  $\beta$  values are both positive. Among them, teachers' colleagues' behaviors have the most explanatory power. In conclusion, this research found that school organizational climate can explain teachers' job involvement, which is consistent with Wiggins(1975), Fisher(2003) , Hoy and Miskel (2013), claims, which is stressing that the school organizational climate is the outcome of the social interaction between the principal and the teachers. It will influence on the individual's behaviors. Also, it relate to Hoy and Clover's (1986) viewpoint that if the teachers can support one another, proceed interaction of profession, respect and accept the coworkers' professional abilities, and are pleased to help the peers solve problems, and provide powerful support and assistance, the teachers will be able to sense such school atmosphere, and will improve the teachers' job involvement.

## CONCLUSION

This study focus on exploring the association among principal servant leadership, school organizational climate, and teachers' job involvement by hierarchy regression. After analyzed the data, and finds that:

First, principal servant leadership can explain teachers' job involvement ,and the aspect of service and community has a stronger explanatory power than democracy and sincerity, proving that the principal should focus on service and community. For example, the principal can handle the school affairs with enthusiastic serving attitude, and devote himself/herself to the school without caring the his/her own interest, or he can positively seek for resource support, help the teachers set up professional community, and respect the teachers' profession to have them fully demonstrate their own strengths to set up the team.

Secondly, school organizational climate also can explain teachers' job involvement, and the teachers' colleague behaviors have the most explanatory power. In other words, in the organization atmosphere, it should emphasize on teachers' colleague behaviors, meaning that during the teachers' working, high degree of cooperation should be demonstrated; or the teachers can attend teaching training to share their experiences together, enhance teaching skills; or they can gather together often to investigate and agreeably join in school activities and tasks in order to raise their professional abilities through such discussion or activities.

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