



## The Perceived Relationships Between Servant Leadership and Organizational Commitment in the Southeastern and Florida Conference Seventh-day Adventist Churches in Jacksonville, Florida

---

Gladness Mtango

*Regent University*

*Roundtable: Organizational Leadership*

### **Abstract**

---

This study focused on the relationships between followers' perception of servant leadership and their organizational commitment, including differences in the perception of servant leadership and independent group commitment. I aimed to analyze the relationships and differences in servant leadership perceptions and commitment between the Southeastern and Florida Seventh-day Adventist Conference Churches in Jacksonville, Florida (Conferences 1 and 2). The study answered four research hypotheses, where H1 and H2 asked whether there was a relationship between followers' perception of their leaders as servant leaders and their organizational commitment between conferences 1 and 2, while H3 and H4 asked whether there was a difference in followers' perception of their leaders as servant leaders and whether there was a difference in followers' organizational commitment between Conferences 1 and 2. The results of the data analysis for Research Hypothesis 1 suggest a positive and statistically significant relationship between servant leadership and organizational commitment. For Research Hypothesis 2, the data analysis does not show a statistically significant relationship between servant leadership and commitment. Research Hypothesis 3 showed no difference in servant leadership perceptions, and Research Hypothesis 4 showed no difference in followers' organizational commitment between the two samples. These study results will help to encourage the presence of servant leadership and organizational commitment in Conferences 1 and 2 and guide the future direction of servant leadership and organizational commitment research and praxis.

Keywords: servant leadership, commitment, church organizations

---

Recorded history introduces us to leaders closely tied to power, authority, and status, but society is now changing (Laub, 1999). Likewise, management theories have evolved, and the philosophies of looking at workers as management tools have also changed

(Laub, 1999). These changes call for new leadership thinking and a vision of organizational leadership that views workers as persons and places service to others over self-interest and self-promotion (Laub, 1999). This view enlightens us that the transitional leadership model based on the use and abuse of power has become outdated (Laub, 1999). Servant leadership is a unique way of thinking about the purpose of leadership, its role, and the potential of the people being led (Laub, 1999). It is an opportunity to serve others using shared goals; it is not controlling but freeing people to grow toward their full potential. According to Sfetcu (2021), servant leadership is a fresh style of leadership that focuses on addressing followers' needs and supporting them to achieve personal and organizational goals. Servant leadership as a theory emerged from Robert Greenleaf (1998).

Although Greenleaf's (1998) views have since been adopted by leaders such as John Gardner (1990) and others, the servant leadership definition was not available, its characteristics were not listed, and the instrument to measure these characteristics was not developed until 1999 when Laub prepared his instrument for measuring servant leadership. Since then, other tools have been designed (Dennis & Bocarnea, 2005, 2007; Liden et al., 2008, 2015; Patterson, 2003).

The interest in the servant leadership style aligns with the new leadership thinking and a new vision of organizational leadership that views workers or organization members as persons and places service to others over self-interest and self-promotion instead of using and abusing power (Patterson, 2003). Servant leadership allows leaders to use shared goals and free people to grow toward their full potential (Dennis & Bocarnea, 2005). In this study, I intend to examine whether servant leadership as a global unidimensional construct can predict member commitment. The study's results will be measured using a tool developed by Liden et al. (2015).

Liden et al.'s (2015) SL-7 tool has seven dimensions: providing emotional healing, creating value for the community, providing conceptual skills, empowering, helping subordinates to grow and succeed, putting assistants first, and behaving ethically. SL-7 has demonstrated high validity, with correlations ranging from .89 to .97. The SL-7 is a modified servant leadership measure developed by Liden et al. (2008), a 28-item multidimensional measure. I selected SL-7 for theoretical and practical reasons. Theoretically, SL-7 is designed to capture global servant leadership (Liden et al., 2015). From the practical perspective, the tool is the most concise servant leadership measurement available (Liden et al., 2015).

Considering the relationship between servant leadership and member commitment, in this study, I predict member commitment using Procházka et al.'s (2019) instrument borrowed from Klein et al. (2014). Organizational commitment is based on commitment as a psychological bond reflecting commitment to a particular target (Klein et al., 2014).

I measured commitment as a one-dimensional construct, a bond subject to change (Klein et al., 2014). The definition suggests it is a voluntary bond guided by personal decisions (Klein et al., 2014). This bond may relate to the organization and a team to a superior at work or goals (Klein et al., 2014). I measured commitment using Klein et al.'s four-item, target-neutral Scale of Commitment (KUT), which has been found to have a reliability ranging from .84 to .97.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Religious organizations are considered critical institutions in the world; besides preaching, they work to help people experiencing poverty, help people in need, and strengthen communities (Pew Research Center, 2015). Like any other organization, they face leadership problems, including corruption, autocracy, inefficiency, member abuse, and neglect. The need for efficient church organizations is even more critical with the recent advent of the pandemic, which requires these leaders to be innovative and utilize unsurmountable resources to keep their organizations environmentally safe and friendly. In addition, these leaders need to make quick and efficient decisions to guide their parishioners (P.O.Omogo, 2019).

Leader evaluation will create confidence in the leadership at the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church in Jacksonville, Florida, and provide a benchmark for assessing the validity of the historically culturally oriented management structures that need to keep two distinct Conferences—a traditionally Black Conference and a historically White Conference doing the same job in the same locality. At the same time, religious organizations are interested to know whether their members are motivated and fully committed to the various assignments they are elected to do and if they have intentions to work as teams to enhance work efficiency in the different departmental positions (communication with one of the Pastors, November 9, 2022).

Finally, although research has found a relationship between servant leadership and commitment, S.Drury (2004), M.H.R.Howladar and M.S.Rahman (2021), J.P.Meyer et al. (2004), and P.O.Omogo (2019) found a significant but negative relationship between servant leadership and organizational commitment. However, A. Abbas et al. (2020) saw the existence of servant leadership but needed to know the relationship between it and commitment. In the current study, I found sufficient evidence to accept the hypothesis H1 of the relationship between servant leadership and follower commitment at the Southeastern Conference. However, I needed help finding sufficient evidence for the Florida Conference. While looking at the differences in servant leadership perceptions and follower commitment, I found no statistical evidence to support the differences.

## **Statement of Purpose**

The concept of a leader as a servant originates from the Bible and Jesus Christ's prevailing leadership (Laub, 1999). Servant leadership as a theory originates from Greenleaf (1998). Servant leadership was subsequently adopted by leaders such as DePree (2011), Gardner (1990), Russell (2001), and others as they admired and practiced servant leadership as a new model of leadership. Servant leadership benefits organizations; it refers to putting others' needs first through social justice, cultural leadership, stewardship, humility, accountability, and empowering others. The current study determines whether there was a follower perception of relationships between servant leadership and organizational commitment among the Southeastern and Florida Conference Seventh Day Adventist Churches in Jacksonville, Florida. I also determined whether there was a difference in followers' perception of their leaders as servant leaders between the Conferences and whether there was a difference in followers' organizational commitment.

## **Objectives**

My objectives in this study were to determine if there were any relationships between followers' perception of their leaders' servant leadership and organizational commitment among the Southeastern and Florida Conference SDA Churches in Jacksonville, Florida. I also learned if there were differences in followers' perception of servant leadership and organizational commitment between the members of the two conferences historically White Conference versus historically Black Conference members). To answer my questions, I looked for church members or volunteers in the two Conferences and measured their leaders' servant leadership perceptions and organizational commitment.

## **Significance of the Study**

The importance of servant leadership and commitment is universal for manufacturing and service organizations, whether small or large. According to Abbas et al. (2020), commitment determines the success and failure of organizations. Abbas et al. also stated that servant leadership, which refers to putting others' needs first, is widely accepted across various domains, including education, healthcare, government, and nongovernmental organizations. My study is significant because it measured the perception of relationships between servant leadership and commitment in these organizations and their effectiveness.

My study is a benchmark for future assessments of commitment and servant leadership in other organizations. The positive research variables could be generalized in other Conferences and religious organizations in neighborhoods and other parts of the

country. The study is also significant because it would provide leaders with a prediction of their member commitment, guiding allocations of current and future volunteer positions. Furthermore, the present investigation offers staunch support for using the SL-7 and KUT scales as an alternative to the SL-28 and other prior scales when researchers investigate servant leadership and commitment as composite or global variables.

### **Scope and Limitations**

One weakness of this study was that the respondents were volunteers. Another weakness was that concentrating on two Florida Conferences and Jacksonville churches alone may have brought up the problem of generalizing the results in other Florida churches or other SDA Conferences in the United States. The generalization issue is fundamental when comparing high-performing and low-performing organizations (Cozby & Bates, 2012). Finally, having two Conferences meant two cultures, which could have affected the outcomes. A cultural problem could also have arisen due to a limited sample because it challenges discovering some aspects of human behavior (Cozby & Bates, 2012).

### **Organization of the Study**

My study begins with statements of the problem and purpose, which sink into the objectives, the significance of the study, the scope and limitations, the organization of the study, and a summary. After the summary, I follow with a literature review, including the theoretical and conceptual framework. The literature review funnels into the research hypotheses and the method section. The method section is divided into research method, research design, sampling method, instrumentation, and data collection. The study also gives research results, discussion, limitations, recommendations for future research, and a conclusion. This is followed by the author's biography, references, and the surveys and demographics in the appendix.

### **summary**

I tested four Research Hypotheses (H1 to H4) in this study. Research Hypothesis 1 (H1) asked: Is there a relationship between followers' servant leadership perception of their leader and their organizational commitment in the Southeastern Conference SDA churches in Jacksonville, Florida? Research Hypothesis 2 (H2) asked: Is there a relationship between followers' servant leadership perception of their leader and their organizational commitment in the Florida Conference churches in Jacksonville, Florida? Meanwhile, Research Hypothesis 3 (H3) asked: Is there a difference in followers' perception of their leaders as servant leaders between the Southeastern and the Florida Conference Churches of SDA in Jacksonville, Florida? Finally, Research Hypothesis 4

(H4) asked: Is there a difference in followers' organizational commitment between the Southeastern and the Florida Conference Churches of SDA in Jacksonville, Florida? I measured servant leadership using the SL-7 scale (Liden et al., 2015). SL-7 demonstrated high validity, with correlations ranging from .89 to .97. Commitment was measured using Klein et al.'s (2014) four-item KUT Scale (Procházka et al., 2019). KUT has been found to have reliability ranging from .84 to .97 (Klein et al., 2014).

## Literature Review

Howladar and Rahman (2021) studied the relationship between servant leadership and citizenship behavior. They collected data from 432 management and staff of private commercial banks in Bangladesh. Using the convenience sampling technique and structural equation modeling, they revealed that servant leadership directly influences organizational commitment and organizational behavior, and organizational commitment directly impacts organizational citizenship behavior. Howladar and Rahman also revealed that the relationship between servant leadership and organizational commitment is partially mediated by organizational commitment. They implied that servant leadership of managers can improve corporate citizenship behavior through the indirect effect of members' organizational commitment. This led me to my first Hypothesis (H1): *Is there a relationship between followers' servant leadership perception of their leader and their organizational commitment in the Southeastern Conference SDA churches in Jacksonville, Florida?*

Abbas et al. (2020) studied authentic and servant leadership in higher education in Pakistan. Using a random sample of 323 survey questionnaires and SPSS data analysis, Abbas et al. revealed that authentic leadership was a significant predictor of commitment and performance. In contrast, though present in employees, servant leadership did not effectively predict organizational outcomes. Realizing their findings contradicted prior studies, Abbas et al. recommended training to ensure employee performance and commitment. This led me to my second Hypothesis (H2): *Is there a relationship between followers' servant leadership perception of their leader and their organizational commitment in the Florida Conference churches in Jacksonville, Florida?*

Fry and Matherly (2006) studied the field of performance excellence, emphasizing the inclusion of nonfinancial predictors of performance and customer satisfaction. These predictors included quality of delivery, the process of internal operating measures, growth, and employee commitment, in addition to financial indicators (Fry & Matherly, 2006). Of these indicators, Fry and Matherly discovered that employee commitment was the primary and leading indicator of performance. Therefore, workplace spirituality and spiritual leadership were listed as drivers of organizational performance (Fry & Matherly., 2006). In their study using chi-square for the hypothesized model, Fry, and

Matherly found that it fitted the data well and supported workplace spirituality as a predictor of organizational commitment.

Drury (2004) reported on a quantitative study of servant leadership and organizational commitment. Servant leadership was measured with the Servant Leadership Assessment (Laub, 1999), and organizational commitment was measured with a scale by Meyer et al. (2004). Drury reported a significant but negative relationship between servant leadership and corporate commitment,  $R = .168$  to  $-.223$ ,  $p < .004$ , two-tailed.

Khan et al. (2020) explained the relationship between servant leadership dimensions and organizational commitment in Karachi's healthcare sector. Two separate instruments were developed for data collection, and the questionnaires were distributed among Karachi's healthcare sector employees (Khan et al., 2020). Of these 350 respondents, only 300 completed and returned both questionnaires (Khan et al., 2020). Since the study had three dependent variables, three separate multiple-regression analyses were done (Khan et al., 2020).

Khan et al. (2020) indicated that emotional healing had a significant positive relationship with affective commitment. On the other hand, altruistic calling and emotional healing had a significant positive association with normative commitment. Meanwhile, emotional healing, wisdom, and persuasive mapping had substantial associations with continuance commitment in Karachi's healthcare sector (Khan et al., 2020). Khan et al. suggested that geographical boundaries limited their study. The results were not generalized to all geographical locations. The study was also conducted only in healthcare organizations and, therefore, determined by the type of organization. Khan et al. suggested that similar studies should be done in other geographical areas and organizations.

Saldaña (2021) explored the relationship between servant leadership and organizational commitment while controlling for age, education, gender, and tenure. The study used a convenience sample from 2,000 participants recruited electronically. Saldaña collected data over a month and yielded 142 responses. The responses were analyzed using SPSS Pearson's correlation coefficient to examine the relationship between servant leadership and organizational commitment. Saldaña used three instruments to gather data for the study: a demographic survey, the Servant Leadership Scale (SLS-7) measuring global servant leadership, and the TCM Employee Commitment survey. Saldaña revealed that age and tenure were strongly intercorrelated. Servant leadership results showed a strong correlation with affective commitment, a moderate correlation with normative commitment at .430, and a weak correlation with normative commitment at .172 (Saldaña, 2021).

Cerit (2010) studied the effects of servant leadership behaviors of primary school principals on teachers' commitment. The researchers collected data from 563 teachers working in primary schools in Turkey. Servant leadership behaviors of principals were measured using the Servant Organizational Leadership Assessment (Laub, 1999), and teachers' organizational commitment was measured using the corporate commitment instrument Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday et al., 1979). Data analysis was performed using SPSS, and the unit of analysis was the school rather than the individual teacher (Cerit, 2010). Mean and standard deviation values determined how the primary school principals performed servant leaders' behaviors and the teachers' organizational commitment levels (Cerit, 2010). Cerit used a bivariate Pearson correlation test to determine the relationship between servant leadership and organizational commitment and conducted multiple regression analyses. Cerit revealed a significant and positive relationship between the servant leadership behaviors of principals and teachers' commitment to the school. The correlation results were  $R = .837$  to  $.932$  (Cerit, 2010, p. 310). Cerit also showed that servant leadership was a significant predictor of teachers' school commitment and that the strongest predictors were valuing people, developing people, and displaying authenticity (p. 312).

Valéau et al. (2013) did a study between volunteer commitment to organizations and beneficiaries and turnover intentions. They intended to use volunteer commitment to discover turnover intentions. They defined commitment as a psychological state, including a desire (affective commitment), a need (continuance commitment), and an obligation (normative commitment) to maintain employment in an organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991, p. 61). Based on a sample of 343 volunteers from various organizations, Valéau et al. found that affective and normative organizational commitment and commitment to beneficiaries are uniquely related to turnover intentions. In addition, they found two statistically significant interactions, namely, affective and normative commitments, and that beneficiaries were more strongly related to turnover intentions when the affective organizational commitment was low. Valéau et al. also found evidence that Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component commitment model applies to volunteers in terms of commitment to the volunteer organization and their beneficiaries.

Melinda et al. (2019) studied servant leadership in higher education to discover the differences in servant leadership perceptions between State and Private Universities (Melinda et al., 2019). The researchers measured servant leadership behaviors as a multidimensional construct using the Servant Leadership Behavior Scale (SLBS). Using the SPSS independent sample t-test, their results showed that servant leadership behavior in higher education differed between State and Public Universities (Melinda et al., 2019). The main difference from the sample was in one of the constructs, namely Transcendental Spirituality (Melinda et al., 2019). This led me to my third Hypothesis



*(H3): Is there a difference in followers' perception of their leaders as servant leaders between the Southeastern and the Florida Conference Churches of SDA in Jacksonville, Florida?*

Kumari and Priya (2017) studied the differences between commitment among employees of Public and Private Bank Managers. These researchers measured the differences in commitment among the two groups using the Organizational Commitment Scale developed by Allen and Mayer (1990). Kumari and Priya used the SPSS Independent t-test, among other statistical tools, to test their hypothesis of differences (Kumari & Priya, 2017). The results from the t-test showed that Public Sector Bank Managers projected more commitment than Private Sector Managers (Kumari & Priya, 2017). This led me to my fourth Hypothesis (H4): *Is there a difference in followers' organizational commitment between the Southeastern and the Florida Conference Churches of SDA in Jacksonville, Florida?*

## **Research Method**

This study employed a quantitative research method whereby I used a combination of descriptive statistics, correlational, and quasi-experimental methods to establish if there was a positive and significant relationship between followers' servant leadership perception of their leader and their organizational commitment in the Southeastern Conference SDA churches in Jackson, Florida (H1) and if there was a statistically significant relationship between followers' servant leadership perception of their leader and followers' organizational commitment in the Florida Conference churches in Jacksonville, Florida (H2). My study also asked whether followers' perceptions of their leaders as servant leaders differed between the Southeastern and the Florida Conference Churches of SDA in Jacksonville, Florida (H3) and whether followers' organizational commitment differed between the Southeastern and the Florida Conference Churches of SDA in Jacksonville, Florida (H4).

## **Research Design**

My study used a causal design while testing hypotheses 1 and 2 and a descriptive design while measuring hypotheses 3 and 4. Hypotheses 1 and 2 estimated relationships with supporting literature, whereas Hypotheses 3 and 4 measured relationships not supported by enough literature (Monge & Williams, 2001). Research Hypothesis 1 (H1) asked: *Is there a relationship between followers' servant leadership perception of their leader and their organizational commitment in the Southeastern Conference SDA churches in Jacksonville, Florida?* Research Hypothesis 2 (H2) asked: *Is there a relationship between followers' servant leadership perception of their leader and their organizational commitment in the Florida Conference churches in Jacksonville, Florida?* Meanwhile, Research Hypothesis 3 (H3) asked: *Is there a difference in followers' perception of their leaders as servant leaders between the Southeastern and the Florida Conference Churches*

*of SDA in Jacksonville, Florida? Finally, Research Hypothesis 4 (H4) asked: Is there a difference in followers' organizational commitment between the Southeastern and the Florida Conference Churches of SDA in Jacksonville, Florida?*

## **Sampling**

I looked at the relationships between members of two distinct conferences whose populations were about 500. The sample size was estimated at 67 participants, which I calculated using the GPower Software for correlations (Faul et al., 2009). I ended up with 70 study participants, 100.5% of my estimated number (33 from the Southeastern Conference and 37 from the Florida Conference). Participants in this study were drawn from a random sample of those with membership in the Conference churches regardless of whether they had a position in the church hierarchy, and participation was voluntary.

## **Instrumentation**

This study utilized the SL-7 instrument, a servant leadership assessment tool developed by Liden et al. (2015) for measuring leadership perceptions, and the KUT scale by Klein et al. (2014) for measuring commitment. The study used SL-7 and the KUT scale as unidimensional scales to answer Hypothesis Questions 1 and 2, analysis of relationships, and Hypothesis Questions 3 and 4, analyses of differences.

My choice of SL-7 was guided by its strong psychometric properties and represented each of the original items in SL-28 (Liden et al., 2008). Second, SL-7 saved time because the respondents completed 21 fewer items with a negligible loss of reliability and validity. I measured servant leadership as a global unidimensional construct covering emotional healing, creating value for the community, providing conceptual skills, empowering, helping subordinates grow and succeed, putting aides first, and behaving ethically. I used the KUT scale (Klein et al., 2014), a tool that measures commitment as a bond because first, it is the shortest of the three most widespread scales, and second, it has been used in other studies (Mai et al., 2016; Procházka et al., 2019). Finally, the scale has good psychometric characteristics (Klein et al., 2014). KUT has an internal validity of Cronbach's alpha > .86, and the individual factor loadings were KUT1 = .97, KUT2 = .84, KUT3 = .96, and KUT4 = .91 (Klein et al., 2014). I measured commitment as a bond in activities such as regular attendance, serving in church ministries, giving, and taking up leadership roles.

## **Data Collection**

My survey respondents included about 500 volunteers from the two Conferences randomly selected with the assistance of their pastors' offices. I used a self-storing link (<https://surveylink.com>), allowing respondents to access and complete the survey. I

also used complementing paper surveys. The survey link included a remark that participation is voluntary and anonymous. The survey link was also posted in the church bulletins of the participating churches. I also used word of mouth to advertise the research during church group meetings and provided paper surveys as needed.

I distributed two survey documents in one link (one for servant leadership and the other for organizational commitment). The Likert-like survey for servant leadership had seven items measured on a scale of 0 to 6, with 0 = *strongly disagree* and 6 = *strongly agree*. The KUT scale for organizational commitment had five items on a scale of 0 to 4, where zero = *no commitment at all* and 4 = *passionate commitment*. Data were automatically saved in a database for later analysis. No identifying codes were included with the data to ensure anonymity. Toward the end of the response window, I sent a reminder email to encourage and thank the respondents for their support. I also thanked those who had completed their surveys, including all the volunteers and leaders who assisted in the survey process.

## Results

The survey link returned raw data, which I assembled and analyzed using SPSS to show the analyses of relationships and the analyses of differences between the two groups (Conferences 1 and 2). I used SPSS Bivariate analysis to show the relationships and the independent sample t-test to show the differences. For the relationships, I analyzed Hypotheses 1 and 2, finding whether there was a statistical relationship between followers' perception of their leaders as servant leaders and their organizational commitment in Conferences 1 and 2. Statistical correlations for the Conference 1 sample showed  $M = 32.9$ ,  $SD = 7.65$  for SL and  $M = 13.2$ ,  $SD = 1.65$  for KUT, reporting medium levels of correlation  $r(31) = .53$ ,  $p = 0.02 < 0.05$  compared to Conference 2 sample  $M = 4.6$ ,  $SD = .93$  for SL and  $M = 3.2$ ,  $SD = .66$  for KUT reporting lower levels of correlation  $r(35) = .24$ ,  $p = 0.15 > 0.05$ . Therefore, sufficient evidence exists to accept H1, showing significant correlations, and rejecting H2 for lack of statistical evidence of sufficient correlations and relationships. To analyze differences, I used Hypotheses 3 and 4 to measure the differences in the perception of servant leadership and the differences in commitment between Conferences 1 and 2. An independent samples t-test showed that for servant leadership differences (H3), the Conference 1 sample,  $M = 33.3$ ,  $SD = 7.80$ , and the Conference 2 sample,  $M = 33.6$ ,  $SD = 6.53$  reported  $t(68) = .17$ ,  $p = .86 > 0.05$ . Since there are no statistically significant differences, I cannot accept H3. For H4, the independent sample t-test for the Conference 1 sample showed  $M = 13$ ,  $SD = 1.73$ , and the Conference 2 sample showed  $M = 13$ ,  $SD = 1.73$ , reporting  $t(68) = .17$ ,  $p = .88 > 0.05$ . Like H3, there are no statistically significant differences between the two groups. Thus, I cannot accept the hypothesis of no differences in organizational commitment and reject the H4 alternate hypothesis of differences.

## Discussion

Servant leadership and member commitment are perhaps among the most crucial assets for organizations, especially church organizations (Abbas et al., 2020). Individuals' differences in servant leadership predict many important world outcomes (Laub, 1999). According to Laub (1999), management theories have evolved, and these changes call for leadership that views workers as persons and places service over self-interest and self-promotion. Likewise, member commitment is essential in organizations, reflecting the dedication and response to work on organizational goals and determining the success and failure of organizations (Abbas et al., 2020).

My results for Research Hypothesis 1 revealed moderate relationships between servant leadership and commitment, showing Pearson correlation coefficients of 0.525, which led to significant relationships at  $0.002 < 0.05$ . We can confidently state that the magnitude of the relationship between servant leadership and commitment of the Southeastern Conference SDA churches of Jacksonville, Florida, is good enough to be generalized to the population from which the sample was drawn at  $p < 0.05$ .

My results for Research Hypothesis 2 did not indicate statistical evidence of a relationship between servant leadership and commitment at the Florida Conference Churches of Jacksonville, Florida. A Pearson correlation of .242 ( $p = .149 < 0.05$ ) was seen in the results. Given the sample size of  $N = 37$ , the magnitude of the relationships of these groups is not good enough to be generalized for the sample drawn at  $p < 0.05$ . My study results on relationships between servant leadership and commitment are inconsistent with J.P. Meyer et al. (2004), P.O. Omogo (2019), and Howladar and Rahman (2021). For example, in their study, Howladar and Rahman revealed that servant leadership directly influences organizational commitment and behavior.

Research Hypothesis 3 asked whether there was a difference between followers' perception of their leaders as servant leaders between the Southeastern and the Florida Conference Churches of Jacksonville, Florida. My data analysis suggested that there is no significant difference in terms of member perception of their leaders as servant leaders between the two Conference churches. Consistent with my study, Pekerti and Sendjaya (2010) found that SL was perceived as culturally universal in the two cultures studied (Australia and Indonesia). Pekerti and Sendjaya (2010), Sendjaya 2015 and Ricky 2017 also found differences among SL's attributes, meaning that servant leadership attributes were not all rated equally crucial across cultures.

Research Hypothesis 4 asked whether there was a difference in followers' organizational commitment between the Southeastern and Florida Conference SDA Churches in Jacksonville, Florida. My data analysis suggests no significant difference in followers' commitment between Conferences 1 and 2. My study results contradict the

belief that culture profoundly influences management thought (Randall, 1993) and are inconsistent with Kumari and Priya (2017), who found a difference between commitment among Public sector and Private sector bank managers.

This study used volunteers from two SDA Conferences in Jacksonville, Florida, using only three churches. Different results could have been found if the sample had been taken from more than three churches or other cities and Conferences in the United States. Possible future research directions include repeating this study using samples from other churches, cities, or Conferences. Second, it is recommended that this study be duplicated in multiple regions of these Conferences or even nationally. Third, further studies may be done to determine potential moderator or mediator variables not tested in this study.

## Conclusion

This study focused on the relationships between followers' perception of servant leadership and their organizational commitment, including differences in the perception of servant leadership and independent group commitment. I aimed to analyze the relationships and differences in servant leadership perceptions and commitment between the Southeastern and Florida Seventh-day Adventist Conference Churches in Jacksonville, Florida (Conferences 1 and 2).

For Research Hypothesis 1, my data analysis suggests that in the Southeastern Conference SDA Churches of Jacksonville, Florida, a positive and statistically significant relationship exists between followers' perception of their leaders as servant leaders and their organizational commitment. For Research Hypothesis 2, my results showed no statistically significant relationship between followers' perception of servant leadership and their organizational commitment in the Florida Conference SDA Churches of Jacksonville, Florida. Hypothesis Question 3 shows no statistically significant difference in terms of member perception of their leaders as servant leaders between the two Conference churches. Hypothesis Question 4 suggests no significant difference between Conferences 1 and 2 in followers' commitment. These study results will help to encourage the presence of servant leadership and organizational commitment in Conferences 1 and 2 and guide the future direction of servant leadership and organizational commitment research and praxis.

---

### Author's Biography

Gladness Mtango is a third-year Ph.D. student at Regent University School of Business & Leadership. Her most recent job was in healthcare, where she worked as a health educator for the Florida Department of Health. Her interests are servant leadership,

total quality management, and e-learning. Gladness is a chapter contributor in the book *Arise and Shine*, edited by K.B.Elineema et al. (2015) and printed in South Africa.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to 5465 Selton Avenue, Jacksonville, Florida 32277. Email: gladmta@mail.regent.edu

---

## References

- Abbas, A., Saud, M., Usman, I., & Ekowati, D. (2020). Servant leadership and religiosity: An indicator of employee performance in the education sector. *International Journal of Innovation Creativity and Change*, 13(4), 391–409.
- Cerit, Y. (2010). The effects of servant leadership on teachers' organizational commitment in primary schools in Turkey. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 13(3), 301–317.
- Chaves, M., & Higgins, L. M. (1992, December). Comparing the community involvement of Black and White congregations. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 31(4), 425–440
- P.C. Cozby & S.Bates, (2012). *Methods in behavioral research*. McGraw-Hill Education.
- Credé, M., Harms, P., Niehorster, S., & Gaye-Valentine, A. (2012). An evaluation of the consequences of short measures of the Big Five personality traits. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 102(4), 874.
- Dennis, R. S., & Bocarnea, M. (2005). Development of the servant leadership assessment instrument. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 26(8), 600–615.
- Dennis, R., & Bocarnea, M. (2007). Servant leadership assessment instrument. In R. A. Reynolds, R. Woods, & J. D. Baker, *Handbook of research on electronic surveys and measurements* (pp. 339-342). IGI Global.
- DePree, M. (2011). *Leadership is an art.*, currency.
- Drury, S. L. (2004). Servant leadership and organizational commitment. In *Servant Leadership Research Roundtable* (pp. 1–14). Regent University School of Business and Leadership.
- Faul, F., Erdfelder, E., Buchner, A., & Lang, A.-G. (2009). Statistical power analyses using G\*Power 3.1: Tests for correlation and regression analyses. *Behavior Research Methods*, 41, 1149–1160.

- Fry, L. W., & Matherly, L. L. (2006). Spiritual leadership and organizational performance: An exploratory study. *Tarleton State University–Central Texas*.
- Gardner, J. (1990). *On leadership*. The Free Press.
- Greenleaf, R. K. (1998). *The power of servant-leadership*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Howladar, M. H. R., & Rahman, M. S. (2021). The influence of servant leadership on organizational citizenship behavior: The mediating effect of organizational commitment. *Southeast European Journal of Economics and Business*, 16(1), 70–83.
- Khan, M. M. S., Ghayas, M. M., & Kashif, S. (2020). Servant leadership and organizational commitment. *New Horizons*, 14(2), 223–240.
- Klein, H. J., Cooper, J. T., Molloy, J. C., & Swanson, J. A. (2014). The assessment of commitment: Advantages of a unidimensional, target-free approach. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 99(2), 222.
- Kumari, P., & Priya, B. (2017). Organizational commitment: A comparative study of public and private sector bank managers. *International Journal of Business and Management Invention*, 6(1), 38-47.
- Laub, J. A. (1999). Assessing the servant organization: Development of the Servant Organizational Leadership Assessment (SOLA) instrument. Florida Atlantic University.
- Liden, R. C., Wayne, S. J., Meuser, J. D., Hu, J., Wu, J., & Liao, C. (2015). Servant leadership: Validation of a short form of the SL-28. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 26(2), 254–269.
- Liden, R. C., Wayne, S. J., Zhao, H., & Henderson, D. (2008). Servant leadership: Development of a multidimensional measure and multi-level assessment. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 19(2), 161–177.
- Mai, K. M., Ellis, A. P., Christian, J. S., & Porter, C. O. (2016). Examining the effects of turnover intentions on organizational citizenship behaviors and deviance behaviors: A psychological contract approach. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 101(8), 1067.
- Melinda, T., & Antonio, T. (2019, October). Servant leadership dimension in higher education. In *2019 International Conference on Organizational Innovation (ICOI 2019)* (pp. 677-681). Atlantis Press.

- Meyer, J. P., & Allen, N. J. (1991). A three-component conceptualization of organizational commitment. *Human Resource Management Review*, 1(1), 61–89.
- Meyer, J. P., Becker, T. E., & Vandenberghe, C. (2004). Employee commitment and motivation: A conceptual analysis and integrative model. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 89(6), 991–1007. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.89.6.991>
- Monge, P., & Williams, F. (2001). *Reasoning With Statistics: How to Read Quantitative Research*. Harcourt College Publishers.
- Mowday, R. T., Steers, R. M., & Porter, L. W. (1979). The measurement of organizational commitment. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 14(2), 224–247.
- Omogo P.O. (2019). *Pastoral leadership: Applying servant leadership characteristics for effective ministry among Roman Catholic pastors in Southeast Nigeria* (Publication No. 2019. 27663544 [Doctoral dissertation, Concordia University Chicago. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.
- Patterson, K. A. (2003). *Servant leadership: A theoretical model*. Regent University.
- Pekerti, A. A., & Sendjaya, S. (2010). Exploring servant leadership across cultures: Comparative study in Australia and Indonesia. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 21(5), 754–780.
- Pew Research Center. (2015). *Collecting survey data*.
- Procházka, J., Židlická, A., Cígler, H., Vaculík, M., & Klein, H. J. (2019). The Czech adaptation of Klein et al.'s Unidimensional Target-Neutral Commitment Scale. *Research Quarterly*, 19, 161–177.
- Randall, D. M. (1993, January). Cross-cultural research on organizational commitment: A review and application of Hofstede's Value Survey Module. *Journal of Business Research*, 26 (1), 91–110.
- Russell, R. F. (2001). The role of values in servant leadership. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 22(2), 76–84.
- Saldaña, B. (2021). *Exploring the relationship between servant leadership and organizational commitment* (Publication No 2021. 28490739 [Doctoral dissertation, Our Lady of the Lake University ]. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.
- Sfetcu, L. (2021). An introduction to servant leadership and its potential for nonprofit organizations. *Jurnalul Practicilor Comunitare Positive*, 21(4), 48–60.



Valéau, P., Mignonac, K., Vandenberghe, C., & Gagnon Turnau, A. L. (2013). A study of the relationships between volunteers' commitments to organizations and beneficiaries and turnover intentions. *Canadian Journal of Behavioral Science*, 45(2), 85.

## Appendix

### Survey A: Servant Leadership Survey Instrument (Liden et al., 2015)

This anonymous and confidential survey asks you to evaluate your leader. The 7-Items in this survey cover a variety of attitudes and behaviors. You will consent to participate in this survey by checking each item below. The benefit of this survey is that you will be helping us understand what factors make up servant leadership.

Please use the following 0-6 scale to indicate your agreement or disagreement with each item. Please respond to each statement by selecting one of the seven boxes: the higher the number, the more robust the agreement with that statement. The selection is a continuum where “0” equals zero amount or agreement, and the highest number equals the maximum amount possible. Please respond to each statement in this section as you believe your leader would think, act, or behave. Return to me via your church clerk or online: <https://Suveylink.us>. Thank you, and may God bless you. *Respondents shall assess the items on the Seven-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (Extremely disagree' to 6 'extremely agree’).*

1) My Pastor cares about my problems and well-being (Emotional Healing).

0	1	2	3	4	5	6

2) My Pastor is actively helping the community surrounding the organization and encouraging followers to participate (Creating Value for the Community).

0	1	2	3	4	5	6

3) My Pastor is competent in solving work problems and understanding the churches’ goals (*Conceptual Skills*)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6

4) The Pastor entrusts members with responsibility, autonomy, and decision-making influence (Empowering)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6

5) The Pastor helps Members reach their full potential and succeed in their faith (Helping members grow and succeed)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6

6) The Pastor prioritizes meeting the needs of members before tending to their own needs (Putting members first)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6

7) My Pastor is honest and trustworthy and serves as a model of integrity (Behaving ethically).

0	1	2	3	4	5	6

Survey B: Organizational Commitment Survey Instrument (KUT, Klein et al. 2014)

This anonymous and confidential survey asks you to evaluate your commitment to your church. The 4-Items in this survey cover a variety of attitudes and behaviors. You will consent to participate in this survey by checking each item below. The benefit of this survey is that you will be helping us to understand what factors make up the organizational commitment of the church.

Please use the following 0-4 scale to indicate your agreement or disagreement with each item. Please respond to each statement by selecting one of the Four boxes: the higher the number, the more robust the agreement with that statement. The selection is a continuum where “0” equals zero amount or agreement, and the highest number equals the maximum amount possible. Please respond to each statement in this section as you believe it relates to your thoughts, actions, or behavior. Return (survey) to me via your church clerk or online: <https://Suveylink.us/>. Thank you, and may God bless you.

Respondents shall assess the items on the five-point Likert scale ranging from 0 ('not at all to 4 'extremely committed)

1) KUT1. How committed are you to your Church? (Regular attendance)

0	1	2	3	4

2) KUT2. To what extent do you care about your Church? (Serving in the ministries of your church)

0	1	2	3	4

3) KUT3. How dedicated are you to your Church? (Giving tithe, donations, and gifts)

0	1	2	3	4

--	--	--	--	--

4) KUT4. To what extent have you chosen to be committed to your Church?  
(Taking up leadership roles)

0	1	2	3	4

### Demographics

Gender

Male	Female

Tenure: How long have you been in this church?

0-5 yrs.	5-10 yrs.	10-15yrs.	Over 15yrs.

Age

18-30 yrs.	30-50 yrs.	50-70 yrs.	Over 70 yrs.

Location: How far is your home from the church?

Ten miles or less	Twenty miles or less	Thirty miles or less	Over thirty miles