Influence of Principals' Servant Leadership Style on Teachers' Levels of Job Commitment in Public Secondary Schools in Kitui County, Kenya.

[1] Dorcus Nthenya Kimuyu, [2] Susan Chepkonga and [3] Jeremiah M. Kalai

[1] Postgraduate Student, University of Nairobi

[2] PhD Lead Supervisor and Associate Professor, University of Nairobi

[3] PhD Supervisor and Professor, University of Nairobi

**Email of Corresponding Author: kdorcus82@gmail.com

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of principals' servant leadership style on teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Kitui County. The study was guided by Servant Leadership Theory developed by Green Leaf (1970). This study employed convergent Parallel Mixed Methods Research Design whereby descriptive and phenomenology research designs were used. The target population was 410 public secondary schools translating to 410 principals, 410 deputy principals and 2417 teachers. Taro Yamane formula at was used to get a sample of 243 schools. Stratified proportionate sampling was used to ensure that all school categories were included in the study. The principals in these schools were automatically included in the study hence purposive sampling. The formula was also used to get a sample of 343 teachers that were randomly selected using simple random sampling with equal consideration of gender. . This was to ensure that all teachers had equal chances of participating in the study. 41 public secondary school deputy principals were too purposively sampled owing to their experience of working closer to the principals and as co- administrators. Data was analysed using SPSS Version 28. A pilot was conducted to test the validity and reliability of research instruments. The statistics included descriptive (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (regression, and Analysis of Variance). Findings were presented in graphs, tables, and in narratives. Results show that; servant leadership has a strong effect on affective commitment (M = 3.89, SD = 1.23, F(4,304) = 5.269, p = .000) and a strong impact on continuance commitment (M = 4.19, SD = 0.90, F(4,304) = 4.922, p = .001). Results further show that servant leadership does not significantly impact normative commitment (M = 2.03, SD = 1.05, F (4,304) = 1.107, p = .353). Therefore servant leadership was highly associated with affective commitment and continuance commitment while it had a low association with normative commitment . The study recommends that; the Ministry of Education and Kenya School of Government should integrate servant leadership principles into principal training programmes. The principals should allow flexibility in workloads to prevent teacher burnout and promote overall well-being. The principals should show genuine interest in teachers' opinions and personal challenges by maintaining eye contact, nodding, and responding thoughtfully. They should also offer encouragement and solutions rather than criticism when addressing teacher performance and provide guidance that helps teachers improve rather than criticizing them. By implementing these practices, principals can create a supportive and nurturing school environment where teachers feel valued, motivated, and committed to their work.

Key words: Servant leadership, affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment
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Introduction

Leadership is essential to accomplishing educational objectives in the educational setting. Educational goals must be fulfilled through synergy between existing educational components, and it must be understood that these elements cannot be isolated from leadership actions. Thus, establishing educational objectives and assigning the required resources are critical tasks for a leader (Amrullah, 2019). For educational institutions around the world to succeed, effective leadership is essential (Li & Liu, 2022). Servant leadership is leadership style exhibited via one-on-one prioritizing of follower individual needs and interests. Servant leader must display exquisite behavior, respect people and subordinates equally, and promote education. To accomplish the shared goals, a servant leader must be impartial and use all of their spiritual, emotional, and intellectual abilities (Eva et al., 2018). The foundational writings of Robert Greenleaf (1970) are the basis for Servant Leadership (SL).

Greenleaf established leadership theory through the paradigm that a servant-leader identifies primarily as a servant and secondary as a leader, and that the choices made in relation to this identity enable servants to fulfil their primary role. This approach improves people's lives by mentoring and guiding others to learn more about servant leadership and develop their service-oriented mindset   (Greenleaf, 1977).

According to Swart, Pottas, Mare, and Graham (2022), teachers who exhibit servant leadership traits are better able to create a classroom where students learn more effectively and faculty members have a more fulfilling teaching experience. Additionally, by avoiding authoritative teaching methods in favor of a more comprehensive, group-based approach to learning, educators who embrace servant leadership and implement its tenets in the classroom are better able to support students in overcoming everyday challenges. Malinga (2020) indicated that servant leadership enhances school success. This is because servant leadership is centred on internal motivation where principals and teachers' passion for education and giving back to the community unite them despite the challenges in rural-based schools. Servant leadership can help to create a positive and supportive environment in rural schools that enables everyone to thrive and achieve their full potential.

Al-Mahdy, Al-Harthi, and Salah El-Din (2020) indicated that teachers in Oman perceived a moderate level of servant leadership among principals, which was positively associated with their job satisfaction. Abdullah and Hussain (2021) revealed a low degree of servant leadership practice in Jordan corresponds with low teacher motivation. There was a positive correlation between principals' servant leadership and teachers' commitment highlighting the potential benefits of adopting this leadership style to boost teacher morale. In Greece, a study indicated that servant leadership was practiced to a moderate extent, and schools exhibited moderate to strong characteristics of learning organizations. Key aspects of servant leadership, such as empowerment and community value creation, were significant predictors of establishing a learning-oriented culture, emphasizing the role of servant leadership in organizational development (Tsakos, 2023).

 According to Millondaga (2024), servant leadership motivates by proving that genuine power originates from helping others. School administrators who serve others know that their job is more than just managing and that they must build strong relationships with teachers in order to empower, encourage, and support their kids' success. In this culture of empathy, compassion, and proactive support, administrators pay attention to teachers' worries, offer prompt support, and create a welcoming environment for development and cooperation. Eliminating obstacles to teachers' performance whether via resources, professional growth, or emotional support is part of serving others. A culture of reciprocity, trust, and respect is fostered by administrators who place a high priority on assisting others. This fosters a positive learning environment where educators are valued, supported, and inspired to achieve. Teachers working in such workplaces proudly identify with their institutions/jobs and opt to stay longer giving their best in all that appertains their job thus job commitment.

A study in South African rural schools found that principals who demonstrated behaviours like listening to teachers' needs, offering support, promoting teamwork, and offering recognition positively influenced teacher commitment. However, the study noted that while servant leadership contributes to teacher retention, other factors like competitive salaries and personal commitment to the teaching profession also play significant roles. The study further argued that not all schools practicing servant leadership are able to motivate or keep their best teachers (Osserand, Gnankob, Ansong, & Issau, 2023). In Ghana, servant leadership in secondary schools has been associated with ethical governance and accountability. School leaders who model integrity and transparency inspire similar values in staff and students, leading to a culture of honesty and responsibility. This ethical foundation enhances the reputation of schools and fosters trust within the community (Osei-Owusu, 2023). Ugandan secondary schools have seen positive changes through servant leadership, especially in promoting inclusive education. School leaders who prioritize the needs of both teachers and students create supportive environments that cater for various learning needs. This leadership style has been associated with increased student engagement and teacher commitment contributing to overall educational improvement (Kyambade, Mugambwa, Namuddu, Namatovu, & Kwemarira, 2024).

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Statement of the Problem

While it is the responsibility of governments to recruit, deploy, promote, educate, and remunerate teachers, the school principals have a role to ensure retention of highly motivated staff as the human resource managers without which access to quality education is limited. Most researchers have explored themes on principals' leadership styles with many concentrating on its influence on the teacher's job satisfaction, teacher performance and learner performance. In the world over, it is generally agreed that the institutions' managerial leadership style has significant effect on the job satisfaction and commitment. Little is known about its impact on the cause of high levels of teacher absenteeism, staff turnover intention, late reporting at work, low levels of teamwork and low performance in KCSE. Kitui County is among the Arid and Semi-Arid (ASAL) Counties characterized by relatively high levels of poverty estimated at 47.5% compared to the national average of 32.4% in 2021. About 50% of the population does not have access to clean water. It has been observed that, majority of the public secondary schools are in inaccessible areas with few or sub-standard social amenities, shortage of clean water, electricity, internet services, quality medication and other crucial necessities. Even though many determinants of teacher job commitment and job satisfaction have been extensively researched, the influence on these main variables are not significantly visible especially in Kitui County context especially in secondary schools hence, the major purpose of this study is to do an in-depth study on influence of principals' servant leadership on teachers' Job commitment in secondary schools in Kitui County, Kenya.

Research objective

The study sought to establish the influence of principals' servant leadership styles on teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Kitui County, Kenya.

Hypothesis:

Ho1There is no significant relationship between principals' use of servant leadership style and Secondary school teachers' job commitment in Kitui County, Kenya.

Review of Literature

Servant leadership is a modern leadership style and philosophy where the leader prioritizes the growth and the well-being of the followers making it crucial for teachers serving in the difficult stricken areas. The leadership style enhances ethical precedence in contemporary organizations (Mulongo, 2020). The foundation of the leadership concept is the conviction that the most successful leaders work to benefit others rather than amass wealth. In the age of globalization, educational institutions are moving toward a leadership style that is more people-centered, collaborative, and collegial in the learning society. "The shift has necessitated educational leadership modifications in responsibilities, roles and change in conventional models of relationships whereby the authority becomes less hierarchical as compared to past" (Afaq, Imrab, & Khan, 2020). In leader-follower relationship the servant leadership style is capable of meeting the current needs of institutions resulting to a good moral, ethical and people-centred management (Afaq, Imrab, & Khan, 2020). "A great leader must first see him/herself as a servant" Servant leadership has been found be an extremely important leadership philosophy that can match the complex conditions of the modern work environment. "The leadership style as a service to others where the focus is on the development and wellbeing of employees, as central means of achieving organizational goals" (Dimitrakaki, 2023).

Saepurohman and Satori (2021) studied influence of servant leadership on teacher performance in elementary schools. The results showed that teacher performance is significantly influenced by servant leadership. This influence arises when the principal can effectively position himself as a coach, mentor, and facilitator for teachers in order to help them develop their abilities and fulfill their responsibilities as educators. In order to support teachers and enable them to contribute to the learning process, the principal allocates school resources to meet their needs. Results also demonstrated that servant leadership has a considerable favorable effect on teacher performance. Bakry and Syamril (2021) examined how servant leadership affected the effectiveness of teachers. The results demonstrated that the school principal's leadership techniques have a significant impact on students' education and learning experiences. The findings also demonstrated that teacher performance is

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positively impacted by servant leadership.   The impact of servant leadership on the performance of Indonesian teachers was investigated by Ram, Muhammad, and Hilwa (2024).   The findings demonstrated that servant leadership significantly and favorably affects teacher performance, indicating high levels of dedication to teacher's work. In Kenya, the Centre for Character and Leadership (CCL) initiated the formation of Servant Leadership Teams (SLTs) in schools to assess and enhance school culture (Bier, 2021). Mang'uu (2022) study in Kitui County on how the school environment impacts teachers' productivity established that, high workloads, insufficient resources, low levels of teamwork and poor relationships between principals and teachers lowers teacher job commitment. Such critical issues create unfavourable and toxic working environments which effect on how well teachers do their jobs. Though there exist traces of insecurity in some areas like Ukasi and Ikutha which accelerate staff turnover intention, high levels of absenteeism even outside these regions is a major cause for concern justifying the need to understand the impact of leadership style in improving teacher job commitment in the region. In Kenya, there are several policies that advocate on teacher commitment. The Teachers Service Commission (TSC) has established policies to enhance teacher commitment. The TSC Code of Regulations for Teachers (2015) guides on the expectations for teacher professionalism including commitment to duties.   In addition, Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI) programs provide leadership and pedagogical training for teachers and school leaders which are aimed at improving job commitment. The Kenya Education Sector Support Programm (KESSP) outlined in the Sessional Paper No.1 of 2005 emphasizes on teacher motivation through improved working conditions, professional development, and balanced promotions for the teachers. The Basic Education Act (2013) mandates that school principals create suitable work environment for the teachers. This includes ensuring manageable work load for the teachers, fairness in disciplinary processes, and inclusive decision making to improve teacher commitment. The implementation of these policies in public secondary schools in Kitui County may be supported by servant leadership. If the principals support teacher promotion and recommendations for professional training, there could be an increase in teacher motivation and commitment

Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by Servant Leadership Theory developed by Robert K. Greenleaf in 1970. The Servant as Leader. Servant leadership focuses on serving others first ensuring the growth, well-being, and development of employees or followers as opposed to traditional leadership models that prioritize authority, power, and control. This leadership style is rooted in the belief that leaders exist to serve their teams, rather than expecting their teams to serve them. A servant leader empowers, supports, and nurtures their employees, ultimately fostering a collaborative and high-performance work environment. Principles of servant leadership theory according to (Greenleaf, 1970) are; understanding and valuing the perspectives and emotions of others, paying close attention to team members' needs concerns, supporting the emotional well-being and personal growth of followers, being conscious of personal strengths, weaknesses, and the organization's needs, leading through influence rather than authority or coercion, thinking beyond immediate tasks to envision long-term goals, using past experiences and current trends to anticipate future challenges, acting as responsible caretaker of the organization and its people, helping employees develop professionally and personally, and creating a culture of collaboration, trust and shared vision.   The strengths of the servant leadership theory are; enhancing staff motivation and morale, encouraging collaboration and teamwork, improving employee development, increasing organization performance, and building trust and strong relationships (Mcquade, Harrison, & Tarbert, 2021). However, Hassan and Raheemah (2021) outlined some weaknesses of servant leadership theory which include time consuming, perception as a weak leadership, lack of applicability in all organizations, and potential for employee over-reliance. In education, servant leadership is an effective approach for school administrators, principals, and teachers. It promotes a positive learning environment, teacher commitment, and student success. A principal who practices servant leadership focuses on teacher development, professional growth, and well-being. For schools, servant leadership improves teacher commitment which in turn enhances student learning, and fosters a positive school culture (Ahmad, 2023). This is done by the school principal in providing academic resources, guidance, supervision, establishing persuasive communication, creating   harmonious conditions in the school (Subhan, 2023).
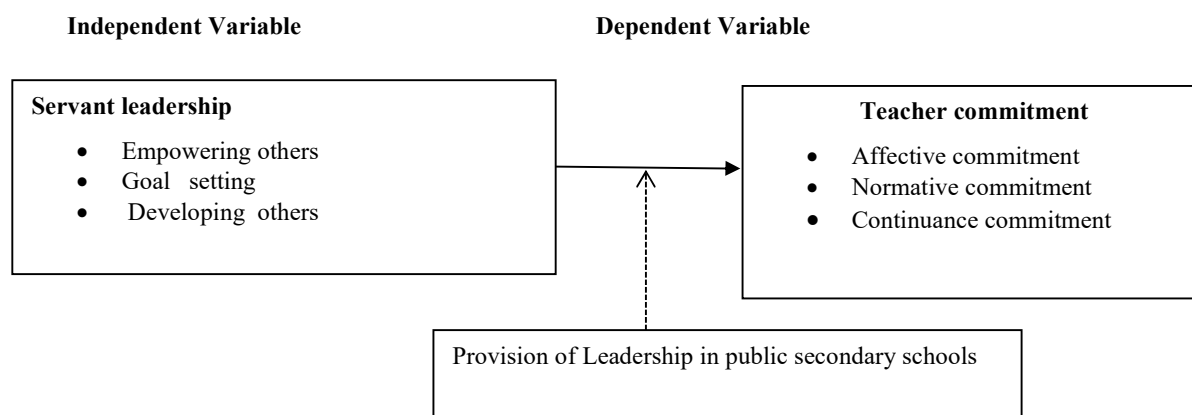
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Conceptual Framework

Independent Variable   **Dependent Variable**

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Variables

Research Methodology

This study employed Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods Research Design. Descriptive and phenomenology research designs were used. The study targeted 410 public secondary schools. The population comprises of 410 principals, 410 deputy principals and 2417 teachers. Stratified and purposive sampling was used to sample 243 public secondary school, 243 principals, 41 deputy principals, and 343 teachers. The study used primary data collection instruments. These included questionnaires and interview guides.   Questionnaires were used for principals and teachers while interview guides were used to collect data from teachers. In this study, content validity was improved through professional judgment to ensure that the questionnaire met the expected standards. Reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient and the threshold for reliability was met. Data was analysed using SPSS Version 28. The analysis was based on descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics included mean and standard deviation. The mean showed the average number of respondents agreeing/disagreeing with statements in the questionnaire and the standard deviation showed variability of the mean. A low standard deviation indicates that data points are clustered closely around the mean, while a high standard deviation indicates that data points are more spread out. The inferential statistics used in the study was regression which helped to establish how changes in the independent variable would predict changes in the department variable. The regression was also used to test the study hypothesis. Interview results were presented in narratives.

Findings

Principals and teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which they disagree/agree with statements related to principals' servant leadership style. Findings are presented in Table 1 and 2.

Table 1: Servant Leadership Style

Statements	Principals (n=184)		Teachers(n=312)	
The principals;	M	Std.	M	Std.
The principal has a caring personality	4.24	0.962	3.39	1.358
The principal challenge teachers to develop their full potential	4.19	1.438	3.93	1.014
The principal has the best interest of teachers in mind	3.80	1.495	4.33	0.484
The principal recognizes teachers' unique abilities	3.88	1.492	4.58	0.494
The principal has confidence and trust in teachers	3.46	1.561	4.41	0.492
Average	**3.91**	**1.390**	**4.13**	**0.768**

Results show that both the principals and the teachers acknowledge that principals value teachers' individual talents and contributions. The principals believe they consider teachers' welfare, and teachers also affirm this perception. Both respondents acknowledge that principals encourage teachers' professional growth, though teachers' agreement is slightly less strong. The respondents were also in agreement that principals trust teachers, but teachers perceive this even more positively than principals. The principals and teachers' disagreement on some issues regarding servant leadership in the school. While principals see themselves as caring, teachers perceive this less strongly, possibly indicating a gap in how care is demonstrated or received. Teachers generally provided higher mean scores for key leadership attributes (trust, recognition, and support). This suggests that teachers have a slightly more positive perception of their principals than the principals' self-reported responses. The lower standard deviations among teachers' responses indicate more consensus compared to the variation in principals' responses.

One of the deputy principals had positive perspective regarding principals' servant leadership. He indicated that; the principal practices openness and creates opportunities for teacher empowerment, fostering a collaborative and professional growth-oriented environment.   They demonstrate love, honour, and respect in their interactions with all school stakeholders, suggesting a people-centred leadership approach which aligns with servant leadership. However, another deputy principal had negative perspective. He put forth that; the principal rarely demonstrates servant leadership, instead adopting a hierarchical, authoritarian leadership style, and the principal does not take responsibility for mistakes but instead shifts blame to subordinates. Failure to apologize or acknowledge wrongdoing reflects an autocratic leadership approach, where power and control take precedence over mutual respect. The contrasting views suggest leadership inconsistency, where some staff experience a supportive and empowering principal, while others perceive a controlling, unaccountable leader. This could mean the principal interacts differently with different people or that their leadership style varies depending on the situation.   If the negative aspects dominate, they could undermine teacher commitment, job satisfaction, and school effectiveness. Findings concur with Aimah and Purwanto (2019) who indicated that servant leaders care deeply for the people that they are leading. The principals who practice servant leadership invest into relationships with teachers to demonstrate care and respect. Hunter et al. (2013) found that servant leadership reduces burnout and stress, factors that often lead to turnover.

The findings imply that the principals recognize the unique abilities of the teachers. This may motivate teachers and encourage them to deliver the best as they are delegated duties that suit them the best. The teachers also indicate that the principals trust and have confidence in them which shows that the principals delegate some roles to the teachers since they are sure that the duties would be accomplished effectively. The principals also give teachers challenging tasks to test their abilities and they also have a caring responsibility. The principals hence care for teachers' welfare which may promote their satisfaction with the work environment and their commitment to the work they are assigned to do. Findings support Saepurohman and Satori (2021) that principals who practice servant leadership are capable of playing the role of a coach, mentor, and facilitator for educators in their skill-building.

Table 2: Teachers' Job Commitment

Statements	Teachers(n=312)	
	M	**Std.**
Affective Commitment	2.20	1.011
I accomplish my duties on time	2.29	0.928
I feel proud to work in this school	4.18	0.604
I am willing to put in extra effort to help my school succeed	3.89	1.223
I feel emotionally attached to my teaching job		
Continuance Commitment		
Leaving this school would require considerable personal sacrifice	0.899	4.18
I have good relationships and benefits in this schools that would be hard to replace at another school	0.869	4.03
It would be costly for me to leave this job	0.885	4.41
One of the main reasons I continue to work here is the stability it provides	0.941	4.31
Normative Commitment		
I have a sense of duty to continue working at this school	2.01	0.945
Even if I received a better job offer elsewhere, I would not leave this school	1.89	1.147
I feel that I owe it to this school to continue working here	4.14	0.837
This schools have given me so much and it would be wrong to leave	2.03	1.044
Average	**3.30**	**0.524**

Results on affective commitment show that the teachers face challenges in meeting deadlines which maybe due to workload issues, lack of motivation, poor time management, or inadequate support from school leadership. Results also show that many teachers do not feel a strong sense of identity or belonging in the school which may be due to poor leadership, lack of recognition, unfavourable working conditions, or strained relationships with administrators. However, despite challenges, teachers are committed to the school's success and are willing to go beyond their required duties.   This indicates a sense of responsibility and professional dedication, possibly driven by intrinsic motivation rather than external rewards. In addition, the teachers still have a strong emotional connection to their profession, even if they do not necessarily feel committed to the specific school. Findings concur with Burmansah, Sujanto and Mukhtar (2019) indicated that strong emotional ties, loyalty, and dedication to the school are experienced by instructors who exhibit high affective commitment. If instructors are happy, content, and enjoy what they do, they genuinely want to stay in school.

Results on Continuance Commitment show that the teachers believe that leaving the school would come with significant sacrifices, such as job security, career stability, and financial risks. This suggests that teachers stay out of necessity rather than enthusiasm, which may impact their motivation and engagement. Results also show that teachers value the social and financial aspects of their current workplace, including collegial relationships, benefits, and institutional familiarity. This implies that while relationships and benefits contribute to job retention, they do not necessarily equate to job satisfaction. If the work environment becomes unfavourable, teachers may still seek external opportunities despite these attachments. Findings show that teachers perceive leaving as a financially and professionally costly decision which may be due to limited alternative job opportunities, loss of accumulated benefits, or the financial burden of job transition. Further, teachers value the security and predictability of their current position. Results concurs with Omonefe and Anyamele (2020) that teachers always consider the cost of relocating whenever they are transferred because of what they get from where they are as it becomes difficult for them to go and start afresh. When teachers consider what it entails to start all over again, they will be committed to their job so as to avoid transfers, and this also helps to improve their performance.

Results on normative commitment show that teachers lack a strong sense of moral obligation to stay in the school. This suggests that teachers do not feel particularly valued or bonded to the institution in a way that makes them feel responsible for its success. Findings also show that most teachers will not hesitate to leave if a

better opportunity arises. This indicates a high risk of turnover, as teachers do not feel a strong ethical or professional duty to stay. If better incentives or conditions are offered elsewhere, many teachers will move on. The findings suggests that some teachers do feel a degree of obligation to remain in the school possibly due to past opportunities, leadership support, or personal growth within the institution. While this indicates some level of attachment, it is not strong enough to override their willingness to leave if a better opportunity arises. In addition, most teachers do not feel guilty about leaving, even if the school has provided them with opportunities which implies that the schools may have provided support or benefits, but these have not fostered a strong sense of loyalty among teachers. Results are in support of Kalitanyi (2022) study which showed that the majority of the university lecturers would leave the job if they had an opportunity to work in a better place. The lecturers also do not also feel a sense of obligation to the universities and are therefore not loyal to the organization. Findings agree with Bett, Allida, and Mendoza (2020) that devoted teachers are deeply inspired by their work and have a strong commitment to it. A teacher who is dedicated to teaching also demonstrates their commitment to the institution by making personal time to participate actively in the school and community. Burmansah, Sujanto and Mukhtar (2019) discovered that educators who exhibit high affective commitment have a deep emotional connection to the school and are devoted to it.The teachers really want to be in school if they enjoy, feel comfortable, and satisfied with their work. Results concur with Basu (2016) that committed teachers are completely devoted to their profession and at the same time satisfied with their profession.

Table 3: Differences between Teacher Commitment and School Category

Teacher Commitment	School category	Total	Mean	SD	F	Sig (2-tailed)
Affective	National	8	4.60	.222	19.680	.000
	Extra County	15	4.67	.218		
	County	76	4.55	.464		
	Sub-county	213	4.12	1.045		
Continuance	National	8	4.03	.381	1.030	.380
	Extra County	15	4.35	.671		
	County	76	4.35	.905		
	Sub-county	213	4.23	.818		
Normative	National	8	1.97	.311	10.338	.000
	Extra County	15	2.38	.208		
	County	76	2.23	.208		
	Sub-county	213	2.65	2.020		

Results in Table 3 show that there is high affective commitment among teachers in all school categories. However, affective commitment is higher in national, extra county, and county schools than in sub-county schools. There is significant difference in teacher affective commitment among the school categories (F=19.680, p=.000).   There is high continuance commitment among teachers in all school categories. Continuance commitment is almost at similar levels in all school categories. There is no significant difference in teacher continuance commitment among the school categories (F=1.030, p=.380). There is low normative commitment among teachers in all school categories. Continuance commitment is higher in sub-county schools and lowest in national schools. There is a significant difference in teacher normative commitment among the school categories (F=10.338, p=.000).

Findings imply that teacher commitment is higher in national and extra county schools than in County and sub-county secondary schools. This could be because national schools have a stronger financial muscle as they charge higher school fees than the county and sub county schools. The national schools also are well equipped with resources thus better working environments which motivate teachers and improve their commitment to work. In addition, the form one entry marks in national schools is higher than county and sub county schools which means most of their learners are committed to excellence. Such learners have positive a attitude towards learning which inspires teachers to remain committed to their duty. As opposed to national schools, the sub-county schools admit students with diverse academic needs that calls for teachers to work tirelessly regardless of poor results which may lead to job stress and reduced commitment to work. In terms of teacher qualification, national schools have more experienced and exposed teachers who interact with internet and sometimes are

taken for benchmarking in other schools performing better than them. the national schools also and some few extra-county schools invite professional motivational speakers who spend time with teachers during holidays to rejuvenate them and educate them on new tactics in improving their teaching. Mental wellbeing is a concern for such schools hence teachers are always excited to remain longer and be productive. Their self-esteem is high thus high levels of confidence. Staffing in national and extra county schools is relatively good unlike the sub county schools that rely mainly on school employed teachers who are fresh graduates and always on transit. In addition, national school teachers are more likely to support training and career development opportunities than their colleagues in county and sub-county schools. Professional training improves teachers' skills in content and delivery and such teachers could portray higher commitment than teachers who have low access to professional development. National schools are also well equipped with more teaching staff translating to less workloads. The schools have better teacher-student ratio unlike the sub –county schools which are understaffed resulting in higher workload and less teacher stress. Findings are in support of Aloka and Odanga (2022) study on influence of school category on teachers' commitment to teaching in Kenyan secondary schools which established a statistically significant difference between school category and teachers' commitment to teaching. Dwiyanti, Rozana, and Gisella (2020) revealed a significant correlation between affective commitment, normative commitment and intentions to leave. However, the relationship between continuance commitment and turnover intention was not significant.

Table 4: Leadership and Teacher Commitment Metrics

Teacher Commitment	(M ± SD)	F-value	df	p-value
Affective commitment	3.89 ± 1.23	5.269	(4, 304)	.000
Continuance commitment	4.19 ± 0.90	4.922	(4, 304)	.001
Normative commitment	2.03 ± 1.05	1.107	(4, 304)	.353

Results show that; Affective Commitment (M = 3.89, SD = 1.23, $F(4,304) = 5.269$, p = .000). This implies that servant leadership has a strong effect on affective commitment. Teachers under servant leadership feel emotionally attached to their work and take pride in being part of the school. This suggests that principals who care for teachers, empower them, and create a supportive environment foster stronger teacher engagement and enthusiasm. Servant leadership positively influences affective commitment, making teachers more emotionally invested in their roles. Continuance Commitment (M = 4.19, SD = 0.90, $F(4,304) = 4.922$, p = .001). This shows that servant leadership has a strong impact on continuance commitment. Teachers stay in the school due to perceived benefits such as job security, relationships with colleagues, and professional growth opportunities. This implies that when principals provide mentorship, fairness, and professional support, teachers feel a stronger obligation to stay. Servant leadership hence enhances teacher retention by making them feel valued and supported, reducing the likelihood of turnover.

Normative Commitment (M = 2.03, SD = 1.05, $F(4,304) = 1.107$, p = .353) . This means that servant leadership does not significantly impact normative commitment. Normative commitment refers to the moral responsibility to stay in the school. The low mean (M = 2.03) suggests that teachers do not necessarily feel obligated to stay just because they "owe" something to the school. This result implies that teachers under servant leadership stay not out of obligation, but because of personal motivation and job satisfaction. The results imply that servant leadership does not significantly influence teachers' sense of obligation to remain in the school. Instead, their commitment is driven by emotional connection (affective commitment) and the perceived benefits of staying (continuance commitment).

Regression analysis was conducted to understand how a unit change in servant leadership may cause a change in teachers' job commitment. Findings are presented in Table 5-8.

Table 5: Model Summary for Servant Leadership and Job Commitment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.571[a]	0.326	0.323	1.256

a. Predictors: (Constant), servant leadership style

As indicated in Table 5, the R-squared for the relationship between servant leadership style and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Kitui County was 0.326 which shows that 32.6% of changes in teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Kitui County may be linked to differences in the servant leadership style. Therefore, the servant leadership style explains 32.6% of variations in teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Kitui County. The conclusion that changes in teachers' job commitment in Kitui County's public secondary schools can be explained by servant leadership style is in line with earlier research. Saepurohman and Satori (2020) found that there is a statistically significant eect of servant leadership on teacher performance.

Table 6: ANOVA for Servant Leadership Style and Job Commitment

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	138.990	1	138.990	88.112	.000[b]
1	Residual	287.091	182	1.577		
	Total	426.082	183			

a. Dependent Variable: teachers' job commitment

b. Predictors: (Constant), servant leadership style

The ANOVA findings in Table 7 suggest that the model used in the study was a good fit for predicting the teachers' job commitment. The probability value (Prob>$F_{1,183}$ = 0.000) indicates that the model was significant, and the F-calculated value (88.112) > F-critical value showing that servant leadership style is a significant predictor of teachers' job commitment. These findings are in line with previous research that has highlighted the significance of servant leadership style in improving teachers' job commitment. Johnson (2021) found that servant leadership have a significant relationship with the teacher morale factors of rapport with the principal and teacher satisfaction with teaching.

Table 7: Beta Coefficients for Servant Leadership and Job Commitment

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		β	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.490	.177		30.964	.000
	Servant leadership style	.574	.061	.571	9.387	.000

a. Dependent Variable: teachers' job commitment

From the results in Table 8, the following regression model was fitted.

$$Y = 5.490 + 0.574 X$$

(X is servant leadership style)

According to the data, the constant had a coefficient of 5.490, indicating that the job commitment of teachers in Kitui County's public secondary schools would be 5.490 units if the servant leadership style were kept constant at zero. Furthermore, the findings revealed that the servant leadership style coefficient was 0.574, meaning that for every unit increase in servant leadership style, the job commitment of teachers in Kitui County's public secondary schools would rise by 0.574. Additionally, it was seen that the servant leadership style was

substantially correlated with teacher dedication, as evidenced by the P-value for the servant leadership style coefficient being 0.000, which is below the predetermined 0.05 significance level. Based on these findings, the study rejected the null hypothesis, which held that there is no significant relationship between the job dedication of teachers in Kitui County's public secondary schools and principal's servant leadership style. According to Wayan, Agung, Ariawan, and Werang (2023), organizational culture, organizational dedication, work ethic, and servant leadership all significantly and favorably affect teacher performance.

Conclusion

The principals always practice servant leadership. The principals practice servant leadership as they exhibit a caring personality, challenge teachers to develop their full potential, have the best interest of teachers in mind and heart, recognize teachers' unique abilities, and have the confidence and trust in teachers. The principal consistently demonstrates love, honour, and respect in the way that they interact with the teachers, students, parents, and all other school stakeholders.

Recommendations

The Ministry of Education and Kenya School of Government should integrate servant leadership principles into principal training programs. This will instill servant leadership skills and they will be able to apply the skills to improve teacher commitment. The principals should promote open communication and feedback mechanisms to ensure teachers feel value and supported. The principals should allow flexibility in workloads to prevent teacher burnout and promote overall well-being. The principals should create platforms where teachers can provide anonymous feedback on school leadership which may help them to improve on areas that the teachers may not feel comfortable with. The principals should show genuine interest in teachers' opinions and personal challenges by maintaining eye contact, nodding, and responding thoughtfully. They should also offer encouragement and solutions rather than criticism when addressing teacher performance and provide guidance that helps teachers improve rather than criticizing them. By implementing these practices, principals can create a supportive and nurturing school environment where teachers feel valued, motivated, and committed to their work.

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