

**ICMR 2019**  
**8<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Multidisciplinary Research**  
**SERVANT LEADERSHIP AND AFFECTIVE ORGANIZATIONAL  
COMMITMENT AMONG MALAYSIAN POLICE OFFICERS**

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***Abstract***

The purpose of this paper is to examine the relationship between servant leadership and affective organizational commitment. The independent variable, servant leadership, is formed by agape love, empowerment, humility, altruism, visionary and trust while the dependent variable is affective organizational commitment. A total of 168 questionnaires were obtained from the police officers, working in a few Royal Malaysian Police Division, which yielded a response rate of 42%. The results revealed that five variables of the servant leadership which is agape love, empowerment, altruism, trust, and visionary are significantly related to the organizational affective organizational commitment. Theoretically, this paper contributes to the literature on servant leadership and organizational commitment. Practically, top management of Police Department of Malaysia should consider trainings and courses on leadership, value, and charisma that boost leadership and affective organisational commitment of their employees. In conclusion, this paper reveals the importance of agape love, empowerment, altruism, trust, and visionary as factors of servant leadership in affecting organizational commitment of police.

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**Keywords:** Leadership, Affective Organisational Commitment, Police Officers, Malaysia.



## 1. Introduction

Organisational commitment has been a subject of interest in the field of management. The concept of organisational commitment is coined by Meyer and Allen in 1997. They mentioned that there are three dimensions in the organisational commitment, which are the affective organizational commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment. In this paper, we chose to analyse the affective organisational commitment only. Affective organisational commitment is defined as a feeling of love and affectionate towards an organisation. An employee who is affectionate towards their organisation would stay longer in their organisation, have low absenteeism (Farrel & Stamm, 1988) and high work satisfaction (Cooper-Hakim & Viswesvaran, 2005).

According to Greenleaf (1977), a leader must act as a 'servant' to their follower. The leader should be able to demonstrate kindness and humility in their act as a leader. The role of a servant leader not only limited to drive the followers in achieving the organizational goal and vision but also, they must facilitate the growth of their followers. In other word, a servant leader prioritizes the interest of their follower (Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2004).

There are many findings that concurred the significant relationship of servant leadership and organisational commitment (Russell & Stone, 2002; Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008; Van Dierendonck, 2011; Cerit, 2010). Most of the studies are done in the Western countries. This paper, therefore, aim to examine the relationship of servant leadership and affective organisational commitment among police officers in Malaysia. The dimensions of the servant leadership are agape love, empowerment, humility, altruism, visionary and trust. This study utilized Servant Leadership Scale developed by Ehrhart (2004).

The first variable is agape love. Agape love is a feeling of affection. When a leader has an agape love, the leader treats his employees with intimacy, tendency and commitment. The second variable is empowerment. When a leader empowers his/her staff, it is easier access to data and also the necessary resources and even have the power to form calls within the organization (Ehrhart, 2004). The third variable is humility. Humility is an acceptance of a thing that is bigger than themselves, is willing to simply accept criticism, consideration for others, low self-focus and settle for their imperfections. The fourth variable is altruism. Liden et al. (2008) visualize altruism as moral values that make people act according to the interests of others without reward or positive balance. The fifth variable is visionary. Barbuto and Wheeler (2008) refer to vision as the concept that the leader expects and sees the person as a living and dignified basic cognitive process, within the future of the individual, and tries to help each other to achieve such circumstances. Finally, trust is when the servant leaders believe in their followers when dealing with a crisis of devolution of rights.

## 2. Problem Statement

Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) is an institution that govern all police division and department in Malaysia. The headquarters is located in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The main responsibility of the RMP is to ensure crime rate is low and the safety of public is well taken care of. In order to sustain this objective, RMP must have a leader that drive a committed police officers in their department. The researcher has

interviewed a few of the head of department (HOD) in RMP. They expressed their concerned about the level of commitment of their police officers in delivering their services to the public. Besides that, they expressed the importance of having a good leader in managing this issue. The issue of whether the police officers are committed or not and how it relates to its leader is very important for further examination. Therefore, this paper aims to examine the relationship of servant leadership and affective organizational commitment among Malaysian police officers.

### **3. Research Questions**

There are six research questions in this paper as listed below:

- 3.1. Is there any relationship between servant leadership (agape love) and affective organisational commitment?
- 3.2. Is there any relationship between servant leadership (empowerment) and affective organisational commitment?
- 3.3. Is there any relationship between servant leadership (humility) and affective organisational commitment?
- 3.4. Is there any relationship between servant leadership (altruism) and affective organisational commitment?
- 3.5. Is there any relationship between servant leadership (visionary) and affective organisational commitment?
- 3.6. Is there any relationship between servant leadership (trust) and affective organisational commitment?

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

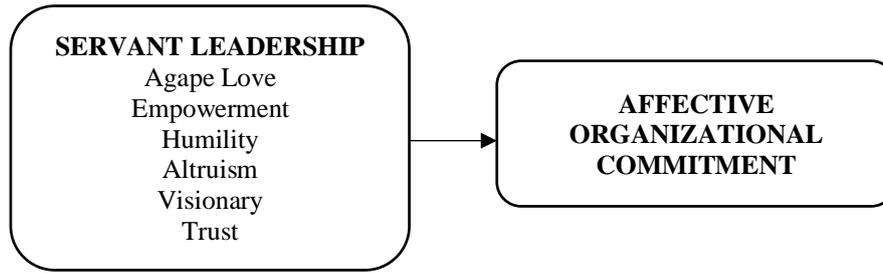
The main objective of this study is to examine the relationship between servant leadership (agape love, empowerment, humility, altruism, visionary, and trust) and affective organisational commitment.

### **5. Research Methods**

This study's population is the employees of the several police divisions in the Royal Malaysian Police in Kuala Lumpur. A total of 400 self-administered questionnaires were distributed among the employees. The study had collected a total of 168 questionnaires; that comprised of 42% in response rate.

This study employed the research tools by Ehrhart (2004) on the servant leadership and Meyer and Allen (1997) on the affective organizational commitment. Moreover, the self-administered questionnaire asked their demographic information on gender, ethnicity, age, marital status, highest education, and length of service.

The study's framework is depicted in Figure 1 that associates the components of servant leadership and affective organizational commitment.



**Figure 01.** Study's Framework

The hypotheses of this study are as listed below:

- H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant relationship between servant leadership (agape love) and affective organizational commitment.
- H<sub>2</sub>: There is a significant relationship between servant leadership (empowerment) and affective organizational commitment.
- H<sub>3</sub>: There is a significant relationship between servant leadership (humility) and affective organizational commitment.
- H<sub>4</sub>: There is a significant relationship between servant leadership (altruism) and affective organizational commitment.
- H<sub>5</sub>: There is a significant relationship between servant leadership (visionary) and affective organizational commitment.
- H<sub>6</sub>: There is a significant relationship between servant leadership (trust) and affective organizational commitment.

## 6. Findings

Majority of the employees were male (n=105; 62.5%) as compared to female (n=63; 37.5%). Almost 60% (n=96) of the employees were married. On the other hand, single employees were 61 (36.3%) and other marital status were 11 (6.5%). Age of the employees with 30 to 39 years old were 69 (41.1%); and followed by 53 employees (31.5%) with the age 40 to 49 years old, 34 employees (20.2%) were 49 years old and above, and 12 employees (7.1%) were 20 to 29 years old. Majority of the employees in the force were Malay (n=122; 72.6%) as compared to 30 employees were Indian (17.9%), 12 employees were Chinese (7.1%), and 4 employees were other's ethnicity (2.4%). SPM holders (n=105; 62.5%) were the majority among the employees; and followed by 33 employees (19.6%) had a STPM, 17 employees (10.1%) had a Diploma, 12 employees (7.1%) had a Degree, and one employee (0.6%) had other qualification. More than half of the employees were corporal (n=65; 38.7%); and this is followed by 33 employees (19.6%) were lance corporal, 27 employees (16.1%) were constable, 26 employees (15.5%) were sergeant, 11 employees (6.5%) were sergeant major, and 6 employees (3.6%) were sub inspector. Table 1 depicts the demographic information.

**Table 01.** Demographic Information

Variables		n	%
Gender	Male	105	62.5
	Female	63	37.5
Status	Single	61	36.3
	Married	96	57.1
	Others	11	6.5
Age (years old)	20-29	12	7.1
	30-39	69	41.1
	40-49	53	31.5
	49 and above	34	20.2
Ethnicity	Malay	122	72.6
	Chinese	12	7.1
	India	30	17.9
	Others	4	2.4
Education	SPM	105	62.5
	STPM	33	19.6
	Diploma	17	10.1
	Degree	12	7.1
	Others	1	0.6
Current Position	Constable	27	16.1
	Lance Corporal	33	19.6
	Corporal	65	38.7
	Sergeant	26	15.5
	Sergeant Major	11	6.5
	Sub Inspector	6	3.6

Table 2 depicts the Pearson Correlation Analysis. The relationship between servant leadership, namely agape love, empowerment, humility, altruism, visionary, and trust; toward affective organizational commitment were analysed on the Royal Malaysian Police officers. The results shown a strong relationship between the components of servant leadership, namely empowerment ( $r=0.827$ ), visionary ( $r=0.751$ ), agape love ( $r=0.750$ ), altruism ( $r=0.747$ ), and humility ( $r=0.735$ ). On the other hand, the trust ( $r=0.421$ ) of servant leadership had a medium relationship with affective organizational commitment among employees. As a result of the Pearson Correlation being positive and concluded that servant leadership components, namely agape love, empowerment, humility, altruism, visionary, and trust had affected the employees' affective organizational commitment.

**Table 02.** Pearson Correlations Analysis

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Agape Love	1					
2. Empowerment	0.784**	1				
3. Humility	0.696**	0.743**	1			
4. Altruism	0.565**	0.617**	0.580**	1		
5. Visionary	0.604**	0.715**	0.668**	0.594**	1	
6. Trust	0.390**	0.387**	0.333**	0.239**	0.343**	1
7. Affective Organizational Commitment	0.750**	0.827**	0.735**	0.747**	0.751**	0.421**

\*\*Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 3 depicts the multiple regression analysis of this study. The Royal Malaysian Police officers had the adjusted  $R^2$  value showed 82% for the dependent variable of affective organizational commitment, which was explained by the components of servant leadership, namely agape love, empowerment, humility, altruism, visionary, and trust. This means that 8% of the variance for affective organizational commitment was explained by other unknown additional variables that have not been explored. The regression model ( $F=120.25$ ,  $p<0.000$ ) was proven to be a significant model due to the  $F$  ratio being significant in predicting affective organizational commitment. Interestingly, almost all components of servant leadership significantly related to affective organizational commitment, namely agape love ( $\beta=0.134$ ,  $\text{Sig.}=0.021$ ), empowerment ( $\beta=0.306$ ,  $\text{Sig.}=0.000$ ), altruism ( $\beta=0.300$ ,  $\text{Sig.}=0.000$ ), visionary ( $\beta=0.184$ ,  $\text{Sig.}=0.001$ ), and trust ( $\beta=0.085$ ,  $\text{Sig.}=0.023$ ). Unfortunately, humility ( $\beta=0.089$ ,  $\text{Sig.}=0.106$ ) of servant leadership was not significantly related to affective organizational commitment. Thus, all hypotheses are supported, namely agape love, empowerment, altruism, visionary, and trust; except humility.

**Table 03.** Multiple Regression Analysis

Variables	Affective Organizational Commitment	
	Beta	Sig.
Agape Love	0.134	0.021
Empowerment	0.306	0.000
Humility	0.089	0.106
Altruism	0.300	0.000
Visionary	0.184	0.001
Trust	0.085	0.023
R	0.904	
$R^2$	0.818	
$F$ -Change	120.247	
Sig. $F$	0.000	

## 7. Conclusion

The findings are consistent with the findings of various scholars. Barbuto and Wheeler (2006), Ehrhart (2004), Joseph and Winston (2005), Cerit (2010) and Ambali, Suleiman, Bakar, Hashim, & Tariq (2010) have found the existence of a positive relationship between servant leadership and organizational commitment.

The findings have shown that the five hypotheses were supported; namely agape love, empowerment, altruism, visionary and trust. This means that Royal Malaysian Police must develop and train their Head of Department (HOD) to act as a servant leader. The HOD must show his/her love to his employees; treat them with respect and trust. The HODs must also empowered their police officers in carrying their respectable tasks. The findings also disclosed the fact that the police officers are more committed if the HOD is more concern about them. Apart from providing the right direction to their police officers, the HOD also must be able to be humble, show their concern to their employee and trust their employee.

In summary, this study has shed some lights in the area of servant leadership and organisational commitment.

## Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank you the Universiti Sains Malaysia for the funding of this study. Ref 304/PJJAUH/6316397.

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