Servant-Leadership in Higher Education

A Look Through Students' Eyes

—Iqbal Alshammari, Florentina Halimi, Cathy Daniel, and Meshari Thaher Alhusaini

Competing in the global marketplace requires organizations to promote their leaders as servant-leaders by replacing the old rules of traditional leadership with the 'top of the leadership pyramid. By focusing on the growth and well-being of people and the communities to which they belong, servant-leadership appears as a promising model to solve problems and promote personal development.

Robert K. Gr*eenlea*f first introduced the term servant-leadership in his book *The Servant as Leader* (1970). As noted by the Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership (1970), servant-leaders start with the desire to serve first, and then they become inpired to lead. Accordingly, Greenleaf described servant-leadership as a practical philosophy that supports people who choose to serve first and lead second.

Parris and Peachey (2013) explained that there is a significant distinction between someone who wants to be a leader first and someone who cares to serve first. The latter is a

person more interested in making sure that people's needs are being served. The difference between those two types of people is that a servant-leader makes sure that people who are served are growing and becoming healthier, wiser, and most importantly more independent.

Laub (1999) defined servant-leadership as placing "the good of those led over the self-interest of the leader" (p. 81). Laub's definition is based on six dimensions that are still used until this day to assess the health of servant-leadership. These dimensions characterize a servant- leader as someone who values people, develops people, builds community, displays authenticity, provides leadership, and shares leadership (Parris & Peachey, 2013).

In education, according to Nichols (2011), a teacher as a servant-leader is someone who is not just an expert or a classroom manager, but is also a leader within their own classrooms, schools, and communities. Based on the existing literature and the framework based on servant- leadership this study investigated students' perceptions of their professors as servant-leaders. The novelty of this study lies in its empirical evidence that servant-leadership behaviors among professors in a private higher educational institution was a recognizable form of leadership, as viewed through students' eyes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Studying the impact of servant-leadership on performance is difficult, as servant-leaders are rarely seen. The revolutionary approach of the servant-leadership model as

introduced by Patterson (2003), is to motivate, inspire, influence and empower followers in a way to serve others. Patterson's concept of servant-leadership includes the following upstanding sub-components:

1) *Agapao love*: has been defined by Patterson (2003) and Winston (2002) as the first servant- leadership sub-component. It presents a pure love toward followers. Winston (2002) noted that *love* requires leaders to consider people's needs, and offer them help;

2) *Humility*: or humble leaders, are known as warm and human. Swindoll (1981) stated that humility operates when one continually looks for ways to serve and give. Accordingly, Tangney (2000) called for greater attention to the sub-component of humility. Tangney viewed humility as a personal and self-based trait that is linked to the leader's behavior;

3) *Altruism*: has been defined as help offered to others selflessly, with no personal gain. Kaplan (2000) believed that altruism requires great personal sacrifice on the part of the leader. Jencks (1990) outlined three types of altruism: empathic unselfishness, communitarian, and moralistic. Empathic unselfishness refers to the identification with the interests of others. Communitarian unselfishness is developed typically around groups such as families and the workplace. Moralistic deals with the internalization of the moral code of an external group;

4) *Vision*: has been viewed as a key to motivate and inspire others to work. For Blanchard (2000), vision is "a picture of the future that produces passion" (p. 5). Vision is a condition for success and productivity performance. In this regard, Hauser and House (2004) pointed out that the "development and communication of a vision is one explanation for the success of charismatic/transformational leaders and their effect on the performance" (p. 258);

5) *Trust*: is identified as the main characteristic of servant-leadership. Story (2002) stated that servant-leaders are models of truth in the way they coach, empower, and persuade. Story also saw that this trust exists as an essential element for real leadership. In this regard, Russell (2001) states that trust is a component of an interpersonal relationship; therefore, a servant-leader must have a great deal of ability, and confidence higher than most of the others. Additionally, Agard (2011) emphasized that trust is established by being completely honest and open while keeping actions consistent with values, and trust;

6) *Serving*: introduces help and responsibility to others. The collection of work by Greenleaf (1996) demonstrated the author's philosophy of serving. Greenleaf emphasized that if leaders would serve others, they must possess the feeling of responsibility in followers. According to Russell and Stone (2002), servant-leaders understand that

service is the center of their leadership, and the aspiration to serve should be their primary motivation. Complementing this view, Russell and Stone (2002) also believed that serving people is a leader's privilege, not fate, and has an innate desire to lead by serving;

7) *Empowerment*: requires leaders to be active listeners, making people feel valuable. Empowerment also requires emphasizing teamwork. Russell and Stone (2002) indicated that servant-leaders empower their followers, and give them increased confidence to perform well. Researchers such as McGee-Cooper and Trammell (2002) stated that, rather than controlling or wielding power, servant-leaders encourage collaboration and ethical use of power.

Teaching as Servant-Leadership in Higher Education

Satyaputra (2013) explored in depth the principles of servant-leadership and suggested that teachers who practice servant-leadership are interested to facilitate students' needs, foster problem solving and promote emotional healing. They also serve as a model of servant- leadership and influence the students to become servant-leaders in their future career.

Iken (2005) suggested an enhancement of the level of servant-leadership in higher education organizations. Two research studies had been conducted to investigate the perspectives of instructors and staff members, using *the Organizational Leadership Assessment Survey*. The first study aimed at studying the faculty members' degree of exposure to

servant-leadership and the second study measured the different levels of servant-leadership as exposed by 99 staff employed in a private university in the Midwest.

To many, servant-leadership may take a back seat in the field of higher education. It is often overlooked and may be deemed unimportant. For instance, Stoten (2013) explored the perceptions of teachers regarding servant-leadership. Stoten also investigated whether or not servant-leadership can be applied in a college setting, as interpreted by teachers. Stoten's study found that servant-leadership was the least recognizable type of leadership.

It is important to consider the transformative essence of servant-leadership in higher education as a new concept to further explain human relationships and its impact on performance. Murray (2008) investigated the conceptual idea of servant-leadership and how applying the principles of servant-leadership can transform learning in a university setting. Murray concluded that applying servant-leadership in a university setting, can encourage interdependency of people and their community. According to Bass (2000), servant-leaders exhibit more altruistic motives and one of the critical differences between transformational leaders, and servant-leaders were bound to the leader.

Joseph and Winston (2005) investigated the relationship between the leader and the organizational trust and employees' insights on servant-leadership. To study this relationship, Joseph and Winston used Laub's (1999) Organizational Leadership Assessment and Nyhan and Marlowe's Organizational Trust

Inventory developed in 1997. Two groups of employees; i.e., high school employees and employed students, were examined using the questionnaire method. The purpose of the questionnaire was two-fold: first to identify servant and non-servant organizations, and second to find the relationship between employee's insights on servant-leadership, and leader and organizational trust. The results supported Greenleaf's view of servant-leadership. As for the servant and non-servant organization impact, the research showed that organizations that apply the principles of servant-leadership had higher levels of leadership and organizational trust, while the non-servant organizations reported lower scores.

Servant-Leadership and Student Learning

Research shows that teacher behaviors effectively increase student learning. Behaviors such as immediacy, organization, engaging delivery, enthusiastic seeking of goals, and positivity uniquely impact student attitudes toward their professors and the course content, leading to a significant learning environment (Kark, Shamir, & Chen, 2003; Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2004). Noland and Richards (2015) confirmed that servant-leadership had shown a significant positive relationship with students' learning if servant teachers teach students. The results also showed high levels of student engagement and motivation.

By applying servant teaching, students feel challenged to learn, supported, and are cared for (Drury, 2005; Hunter, Neubert, Perry, Witt, Penney, & Weinberger, 2013). The nature of servant-leadership along with its healing skills should have a positive impact on students' learning, as students feel that their

inputs and opinions are taken seriously into the learning process (Bowman, 2005; Drury, 2005). On the other hand, as indicated by Greenleaf (1996), teachers become servant-leaders when they listen to their students' needs and empower students to succeed. They also care to promote emotional healing, to help students overcome the learning challenges, and thus succeed.

Previous research studies investigating gender differences in leadership have revealed contradictory findings. Whereas some studies have found that men score significantly higher than women, others have reported no differences between women and men (Eagly, Karu, Miner, & Johnson, 1994; Winter, 1988). More recent research (Laub, 1999; Braye, 2000; Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Jacobs, 2011; Goodwin, 2011) who examined gender differences in servant-leadership, revealed that males and females equally and effectively utilized servant-leadership dimensions.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to investigate undergraduate students' perceptions of their professors' leadership traits. Potential gender differences, type of high school, students' GPA, age, and nationality were examined. Based on the literature review, the following research questions were posed:

> 1) What are the university students' perceptions of servant-leadership among their professors?

> 2) Are there statistically significant differences in student perceptions of their professors' servant-leadership based on students' gender, type of school, student GPA, age,

and nationality?

METHODOLOGY

Procedures

Building upon the servant-leadership theory developed by Patterson (2003), a modified version of 'Servant-Leadership Assessment Instrument SLAI developed by Robert Dennis and Mihai Bocarnea (2005) was used to measure seven behavioral sub-components, which is a 42-item scale, of servant-leadership. To develop an in-depth analysis of the seven behavioral traits of servant-leadership, the researchers employed the survey research method to address some students' beliefs of servant-leadership in private tertiary education. Dennis and referred to the literature on servant-leadership in building a set of items; gathered a committee of experts who reviewed, added, and excluded items as needed; and constructed an item questionnaire in collaboration with the groups of experts.

Permission was granted to use this instrument for this research. However, drawing on the impact of the pedagogical practice on students' perception of servant-leadership in Kuwaiti context, 4 items were excluded from the list. The items (9, 12, 34 and 41) were excluded because they measured respondent's interest and involvement in national and university political affairs. The first item was excluded because it measured professors' endured hardships, e.g., politics, "turf wars" to defend the students; the second item was excluded because it measured professors' merits, and students do not

possess such information; the third item was excluded because it measured professors and students' contribution to the written the vision of the company/university; and the fourth item was excluded because it measured corruption.

Setting

This study was conducted at a private American university in Kuwait. As stated by Casey (2007), Kuwaiti citizens are ethnically Arab by birth and the official language of the country is Arabic, though English, particularly American English, is the second and is a widely spoken language, especially in the business and population centers. The standard of living in Kuwait is high as the result of the oil industry, and unemployment is non-existent, not only for the Kuwaiti but also for other people emigrating from neighboring countries in search of work. According to Al Awadi (1957), the system of education, as always in every community, is subject to and is affected by the customs of that community and its traditions as well as its means of livelihood. Safwat (1993) reports that most of the education in Kuwait is governmental and free. University-level education is divided into applied colleges and Kuwait University, which is the only government university in Kuwait. However, the Kuwait government allowed the establishment of private educational institutions following the American, British, French, and other international educational systems.

Participants

Participants for the study consisted of a self-selected sample taken from the university's response database. This

database assists researchers with obtaining participants for research studies. Students were recruited using an online version of the instrument. The data collection began a few weeks into the Fall 2018 semester and concluded around the final week of instruction to ensure students' familiarity with their professors over the academic year 2017-2018. The final results of the survey included 789 participants from many different majors. The survey instructions asked students to think about their professors' behaviors in an attempt to capture a broad range of disciplines, professors, and courses in the sample. The responses indicated a wide range of courses, for which the professor population was well distributed for gender, race, and educational disciplines.

Data Collection and Analysis

The study population consisted of 789 undergraduate students who were enrolled at a private university, located in Kuwait, during the 2018-2019 academic year. The dependent variable in this study was the student perceptions of professors' servant-leadership behavior reported as responses on the SLAI items. The independent variables were: gender, the type of the high school the student attended before admitting at the university (government or private), their GPA, age, and nationality.

To analyze the data related to the research questions, descriptive statistics were calculated, followed by independent t-tests and ANOVA computations. Cronbach's Alpha analyses were used to determine the internal reliability of the SLAI for this population of students. The data were collected using

Qualtrics software. Qualtrics software allowed to classify items to specific variables and integrate them directly into SPSS software for statistical testing.

FINDINGS

Demographics and Characteristics Data of the Sample

Descriptive statistics were used to report demographic data on the students' participating in this study. As shown in Table 1, the sample of the study consists of 789 participants. 69.1% of the participants in this study were females, while 30.9% were males. This reflects the total population of 3,622 active students: 2,265 (62.5%) are female students, and 1,357 (37.5%) are males. It may also be assumed that the invitation to participate in a survey appeals more to females than males showing more task-oriented leadership than their male counterparts. The mean of student GPA is 2.6, and the reported Standard Deviation is 0.96. The mean age of all participants was 20.9 years old (SD = 3.35). Out of the 789 students participated in this study, 55.2% of them were coming from Government/ Public High Schools, whereas 44.9% were coming from Private High Schools. The undergraduate students enrolled in twelve undergraduate programs representing two colleges; College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) and College of Business Administration (CBA). Most of the participants in this study are students studying CBA majors (56.66%), followed by CAS majors (43.34%).

Table 1 *Demographic Distributions of Participants*

Variable		%	*n*
Gender	Males	30.9	244
	Females	69.1	545
Age	Under 19	39.5	312
	19-23	47.7	376
	Over 23	12.8	101
Schooling system	Private High Schools	44.9	354
	Government/ Public High Schools	55.2	435
Major	College of Arts and Sciences (CAS)	43.3	347
	College of Business Administration (CBA).	56.6	442
GPA	<2	20.2	159
	2-3	45.9	362
	>3	33.5	264
Nationality	Kuwait citizen	87.6	690
	Permanent resident but not Kuwait	7.5	59
	Resident of a different country but studying in Kuwait	3.7	29
	Other	1.3	10

Table 2 presents the number of respondents, mean scores, and standard deviations of the study. These results are relevant because they indicate students' ratings of their professors' servant-leadership attributes. Self-rated scales of servant-leadership scales showed means ranging from M=3.85 to M=4.07.

Table 2 *Number of Respondents, Mean Scores, Standard Deviations*

Construct	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
Agapao Love	789	4.07	1.26
Humility	789	3.85	1.16
Altruism	789	3.91	1.21
Vision	789	3.94	1.28
Trust	789	4.00	1.21
Serving	789	4.02	1.11
Empowerment	789	4.07	1.19

The results indicate that students' perception of their professors' servant-leadership practices was high for each construct as measured by the SLAI. The highest rating was found for three constructs of servant-leadership: 'Agapao loving,' which includes effective listening, valuing people and equality received the highest value with the mean score of M=4.07 (SD=1.26). 'Empowerment' as a behavioral attribute of servant-leadership also received the highest value with the mean score of M=4.07 (SD =1.19); and 'Serving,' which refers to offering help just for the sake of helping others, received the value of mean score M=4.02 (SD= 1.11). The lowest reported behavioral SL constructs were for 'Humility' (M=3.85, SD=1.16); Altruism (M=3.91, SD=1.21); Vision (M=3.94, SD=1.28); and Trust (M= 4.00, SD=1.21). Note: the mean scores are based on a 7-point Likert scale, with 0 being the lowest value and 6 being the highest.

Reliability of the Scale

    To calculate the Reliability of Servant-Leadership, Cronbach's Alpha Reliability test was conducted to measure the internal consistency of the servant-leaders' scale and its behavioral attributes. Internal consistency describes the extent to which all the items measure the same component and are connected to the interrelatedness of the items within the scale. Reliability of Servant-leadership scale has seven variables including 42 items; however, for this study 4 items were excluded. Factor loadings of the 38 items of the scale produced seven factors. The reported Cronbach's alpha for items in this instrument was .980, which indicates a higher reliability score similar to the original scale calculated by the developers. The seven factors accounted for 53.5, 3.7, 2.8, 2.7, 2.3, 2.08, and 1.9% of the total variance, respectively. Table 3 provides reliability results of the modified servant-leadership (SL) scale and its behavioral attributes.

Table 3 *Reliability scores of the SL Scale*

Variable	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
Agapao Loving	11	.954
Humility	4	.890
Altruism	2	.711
Vision	4	.797
Trust	5	.756
Serving	3	.809
Empowerment	10	.947

The results indicate that the majority of the SL behavioral attributes have high reliability. Self-rated scales of servant-leadership scales showed means ranging from .711 to .954. The results show that 'Agapao loving,' which includes effective listening, valuing people and equality receives the highest value with a scale of (.954). 'Empowerment' as a behavioral attribute of servant-leadership receives a high value of (.947). 'Serving' leaders offer help just for the sake of helping others. This behavioral attribute receives (.809). The reported Cronbach alpha for 'Vision' is (.797). 'Altruism' and 'Trust' were the lowest reported reliable attributes.

EFFECTS OF GENDER, TYPE OF HIGH SCHOOL, GPA, AGE AND STUDENT NATIONALITY ON SL

Given the motive of this study with which educators are servant-leaders who serve others, the second research question is "Are there statistically significant differences in Servant-leadership and its behavioral attributes attributable to gender, type of high school attended, student's GPA, and student's major, as perceived by university students?" To answer this question, means, standard deviation, and independent sample of the T-Test were computed to measure the effects of gender, type of school, GPA, students' age, and their nationality on students' perceptions of their professors' servant-leadership behavior. Table 4 shows the calculated means and standard deviation results by students' gender.

Table 4 *Means and Standard Deviation for SL Behavioral Attributes regarding Gender*

Gender		n	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	p
Agapao Love	male	244	4.14	1.24	1.346	.267
	female	545	4.03	1.27		
Humble	male	244	3.94	1.14	1.421	.156
	female	545	3.81	1.17		
Altruistic	male	244	3.98	1.19	1.112	.156
	female	545	3.89	1.21		
Visionary	male	244	4.02	1.29	1.148	.251
	female	545	3.91	1.27		
Trusting	male	244	4.12	1.13	1.854	.064
	female	545	3.94	1.24		
Serving	male	244	4.10	1.08	1.391	.165
	female	545	3.99	1.12		
Empowering	male	244	4.08	1.18	.273	.785
	female	545	4.06	1.20		
SL Total	male	244	4.05	1.09	1.273	.203
	female	545	3.94	1.12		

Although male students scored higher on each SL construct than female students did, these differences were not statistically significant.

The results in Table 5, indicate no statistically significant differences by students' type of high school (public or private). Professors' SL scores obtained from students who graduated from a private high school were not significantly different from students who graduated from a public school.

Table 5 *Means and Standard Deviation for SL Behavioral Attributes regarding Type of School*

Type of School		*n*	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	*p*
Agapao Love	Public	435	4.11	1.30	1.283	.200
	Private	354	4.01	1.21		
Humble	Public	435	3.86	1.26	1.20	.229
	Private	354	3.93	1.22		
Altruistic	Public	435	3.90	1.38	1.30	.194
	Private	354	3.93	1.31		
Visionary	Public	435	3.95	1.24	.831	.407
	Private	354	3.93	1.17		
Trusting	Public	435	4.04	1.17	1.24	.215
	Private	354	3.95	1.24		
Serving	Public	435	4.04	1.15	.005	.240
	Private	354	4.01	1.06		
Empowering	Public	435	4.00	1.22	.032	.289
	Private	354	4.12	1.15		
SL Total	Public	435	3.94	1.14	.484	.382
	Private	354	4.01	1.07		

Table 6 presents the mean score for SL behavioral attributes regarding students' GPA. The mean score average number of students' perception for SL attributable to their GPA <2 was M=5.00 (SD=1.21), GPA <2.00-3.00 was M=4.94 (SD=1.10); and GPA> 3 was M=5.10 (SD=1.05). However, the overall score of the scale did not show a significant difference at p ≤ 0.05 level. Student GPA did not influence how students perceived their professors' SL attributes.

Table 6 *Ratings of Professor SL Behavioral Attributes Based on Student GPA*

Sl Constructs	Between	Within	df	F	p-value
Agapao Love	1.553	1.637	2/782	.967	.381
Humble	0.988	1.369	2/782	.722	.486
Altruistic	2.365	1.465	2/782	1.614	.200
Visionary	0.685	1.637	2/782	.415	.660
Trusting	2.756	2.087	2/782	1.880	.153
Serving	1.956	1.873	2/782	1.586	.205
Empowering	2.277	1.421	2/782	1.603	.202
SL total	1.551	1.241	2/782	1.250	.287

As indicated in Table 7, the overall score of the rating scale of professors' SL behavioral attributes base on student age, did not show a significant difference at $p \leq 0.05$ level.

Table 7 *Ratings of Professor SL Behavioral Attributes Based on Student Age*

Sl Constructs	Between	Within	df	F	p-value
Agapao Love	2.116	1.605	2/786	.381	.268
Humble	1.595	1.368	2/786	.486	.312
Altruistic	0.931	1.468	2/786	.200	.531
Visionary	0.103	1.642	2/786	.660	.939
Trusting	0.346	1.470	2/786	.236	790
Serving	0.523	1.239	2/786	.423	.656
Empowering	0.385	0.764	2/786	.270	.764
SL total	0.646	1.244	2/786	.520	.595

Regarding the students' nationality (Kuwait citizen, permanent citizen, but not Kuwaiti, and resident of a different country but studying in Kuwait), permanent residents who live in Kuwait reported significantly higher SL scores for their professors for 'agapao love' (P=.050) and 'trusting' (P=.050) than did students who lived outside the country or were Kuwait citizens.

Table 8 *Ratings of Professor SL Behavioral Attributes Based on Student Nationality*

Sl Constructs	Between	Within	df	F	p-value
Agapao Love	4.089	1.597	3/784	2.560	.050
Humble	1.977	1.367	3/784	1.446	.228
Altruistic	2.182	1.466	3/784	1.489	.216
Visionary	1.328	1.642	3/784	.809	.489
Trusting	3.777	1.457	3/784	2.593	.050
Serving	3.053	1.232	3/784	2.479	0.60
Empowering	1.247	1.868	3/784	.874	.454
SL total	2.132	1.241	3/784	1.718	.162

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Results of the analysis demonstrated that:

1) Students attending this private university in Kuwait were able to identify among their professors, characteristics of SL. Characteristics students rated the highest were Agapao Love, Empowerment, Serving, and Trust.

2) There were no significant differences in students' observation of SL among their professors based on

gender, age, the type of high school they attended, or university GPA.

3) There was a significant difference in students' observations of SL attributed among their professors for students who were permanent residents but who were not Kuwait citizens. This group of students rated their professors' SL attributes higher for both Agapao Love and Trusting than did students who were Kuwait citizens or were from another country.

DISCUSSION

Applying a modified version of 'Servant-Leadership Assessment Instrument' SLAI (Dennis & Bocarnea, 2005) and the building upon the servant-leadership theory (Patterson 2003), we strove to investigate students' perception of their professors' servant-leadership behavior in a private university in Kuwait.

There are several conclusions which can be drawn from the current study. First, the present study demonstrates that servant-leadership scale proved to be reliable. By analyzing the responses, servant-leadership items were well understood by the students. Second, when using self-report measures, the results of this study reveal that male students have higher levels of servant-leadership beliefs in every SL behavioral attribute, indicating that male students were more aware of their professors' servant-leadership behavior (M=4.05) than the female students (M=3.94). This finding contradicts the literature that indicates no gender differences in the practices of

servant-leadership (Laub, 1999; Braye, 2000; Barbuto & Gifford, 2008; Jacobs, 2011; Goodwin, 2011). This sample included more female (69%) than male (30.9%) students. While homogeneity of variance tests found the groups to be acceptable for comparison, a sample with equal male representation could strengthen this limitation of our research.

High school type of students was found to have an impact on students' perception of their professors' SL behavior attributes. Although the results indicated no statistically significant differences, when using self-report measures, the results indicated that students who graduated from private high school had a higher awareness of the servant-leadership behavior about their professors (M=4.01) than the students who graduated from public schools (M=3.94).

Considering the SL behavioral attributes to students' GPA, the results indicate no significant difference. However, the results reported that students with GPA>3, saw their professors' SL behavior attributable to 'empowering' dimension.

Concerning age groups, no significant differences were obtained. However, the results showed that students aged 19 to 23 years old SL beliefs were more attributable to 'empowering' dimension. It appears that these students have a higher level of beliefs regarding professors' empowering behavior who proved them increased confidence to perform well.

Relating to students' nationality (Kuwait citizen, permanent citizen, but not Kuwaiti, and resident of a different country but studying in Kuwait) the results indicated, a significant

difference attributable to 'Agapao Love' (P=.050), 'Trusting' (P=.050), and 'serving' (P=.060). Kuwaiti students and students with permanent residency were more attributable to 'agapao love' dimension, whereas students who were resident from a different country but studying in Kuwait, were more attributable to 'empowering' dimension.

This research involved the students studying at a private university based in Kuwait. This institution was selected primarily because of its accessibility of students' interaction with professors within the university. The ability to identify the students' perception of professors' SL behavior in the university will provide the institution insight into servant-leadership practices. Therefore, a review of servant-leadership development and preparation in an educational setting is likely necessary if students' outcomes are to be improved. The study also indicated that educational leaders, particularly professors', would potentially benefit from reflecting on their teaching styles seeking to adopt servant teaching models to ensure a students' successful studies.

The findings of this study add some useful information to the field of servant-leadership and report the way students see their professors' servant-leadership behavior. According to Parris and Peachey (2013), there is a significant distinction between someone who wants to be a leader first and someone who cares to serve first. The difference between those two types of people is that a servant-leader makes sure that people who are served are growing and becoming healthier, wiser, and most importantly more independent. Therefore, it is essential

for professors to check how the students perceive them.

The results of this study develop the utilization of servant-leadership in a higher educational setting in that it looked at students' perceptions of servant-leadership behavior. In an educational setting, it is known that the perception of the students' SL behavior of their professors may play an important role in student achievement. Through servant teaching, students feel challenged to learn, supported, and are cared for (Drury, 2005; Hunter et al., 2013). The nature of servant-leadership should have a positive impact on students' learning, as students feel that their inputs and opinions are taken seriously into the learning process (Bowman, 2005; Drury, 2005).

The present research study extends our understanding of how students, in a private university setting, see their professors regarding the servant-leadership style. As indicated in the literature review, not many studies to date have investigated the characteristics of professors' leadership behavior as perceived by the students. However, research on servant-leadership is still very limited, and more studies are needed to be conducted in order to understand instructional servant-leadership values, the influence of SL specific attributes, and the effects of those behaviors. The study indicates the need for in-depth interviews with the students in order to find out more about professors' servant-leadership style from a cultural perspective. Also, further research is needed, to investigate professors' leadership style in public higher educational setting through the students' eyes.

References

Agard, K. A. (Ed.). (2011). *Leadership in nonprofit organizations: A reference handbook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Al-Awadi, A. R. (1957). Education in Kuwait. *The Vocational Aspect of Secondary and Further Education, 9*(19), 101-106.

Barbuto, J. E., & Wheeler, D. W. (2006). Scale development and construct clarification of servant leadership. *Group & Organization Management, 31*(3), 300-326.

Bass, B.M. (1990). *Bass and Stogdill's handbook of leadership: Theory, research, & managerial applications* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: The Free Press.

Bass, B. M. (2000). The future of leadership in learning organizations. *The Journal of Leadership Studies, 7*, 18-34.

Blanchard, K. (2000). Leadership by the book. *Executive Excellence, 17*(3), 4-5.

Bowman, R. F. (2005). Teacher as servant leader. *Clearing House, 78*(6), 257-259.

Braye, R. H. (2000). *Servant leadership: beliefs and practice in women-led businesses* (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses. (UMI No. 9981536).

Casey, M. S. (2007). *The history of Kuwait*. Westport: Greenwood Press.

Dennis, R., & Bocarnea, M. (2005). Development of the servant leader instrument. *Leadership & Organizational Development Journal, 26*(8), 600-615.

Drury, S. (2005). Teacher as servant leader: A faulty model for effectiveness with students. A paper presented at the Servant Leadership Research Roundtable, Regent University, Virginia Beach, VA.

Eagly, A. H., Karau, S. J., Miner, J. B., & Johnson, B. T. (1994). Gender and motivation to manage in hierarchic organizations: A meta-analysis. *Leadership Quarterly, 5*, 135–159. DOI: 10.1016/ 1048-9843(94)90025-6

Goodwin, O. (2011). *Committed to serve: A descriptive study of the growing presence of servant leadership within a nonprofit*

organization (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses. (UMI No. 3465563).

Greenleaf, R. K. (1970). Essentials of servant leadership. In L. C. Spears and M. Lawrence (Eds.), *Focus on leadership: Servant for the 21st century* (pp. 19-26). New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.

Greenleaf, R. K. (1996). *On becoming a servant-leader*. D. M. Frick & L. C. Spears (Eds.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Gulf University for Science and Technology. (2016). 2016-2018 University Catalog-GUST. Retrieved from https://www.gust.edu.kw/admission_registration/university_bull etin

Iken, S. L. (2005). *Servant leadership in higher education: Exploring perceptions of educators and staff employed in a university setting* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database). (UMI No. 3199527)

Jacobs, K. (2011). *Assessing the relationship between servant leadership and effective teaching in a private university setting* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses. (UMI No. 3486356)

Jencks, C. (1990). Varieties of altruism. In J. J. Mansbridge (Ed.), *Beyond Self-Interest* (pp. 53-67). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Joseph, E. E., & Winston, B. E. (2005). A correlation of servant leadership, leader trust, and organizational trust. *Leadership & Organizational Development Journal, 26*(1), 6-22.

Hauser, M., & House, R.J. (2004). Lead through vision and values. In E.A. Locke (Ed.), *Handbook of the principles of organizational behavior* (pp. 257-273). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Humility (2017). In Merriam-Webster.com. Retrieved June 30, 2017, from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/humility

Hunter, E. M., Neubert, M. J., Perry, S. J., Witt, L. A., Penney, L. M., & Weinberger, E. (2013). Servant leaders inspire servant followers: Antecedents and outcomes for employees and the organization. *Leadership Quarterly, 24*(2), 316-331.

Kaplan, S. (2000). Human nature and environmentally responsible behavior. *Journal of Social Issues, 56*(3), 491-505.

Kark, R., Shamir, B., & Chen, G. (2003). The two faces of

transformational leadership: Empowerment and dependency. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 88*, 246-255.

Laub, J. A. (1999). *Assessing the servant organization: Development of the servant organizational leadership assessment (SOLA) instrument* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton.

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. DOI: 10.1016/j.leaqua.2008.01.006.

McGee-Cooper, A. & Trammell, D. (2002). From hero-as-leader to servant-as-leader. In L. C. Spears & M. Lawrence (Eds.), *Focus on leadership: Servant-leadership for the 21st century* (pp. 141-152). New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.

Murray, C. (2008). *The transformative essence of servant-leadership in the higher education environment: A case study*. (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertation and Theses database. (UMI No.3310701)

Nichols, J. (2011). *Teachers as servant leaders*. Plymouth, UK: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Noland, A., & Richards, K. (2015). Servant teaching: An exploration of teacher servant leadership on student outcomes. *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, 15*(6), 16-38.

Parris, D. L., & Peachey, J. W. (2013). A systematic literature review of servant leadership theory in organizational contexts. *Journal of Business Ethics, 113*(3), 377-393.

Patterson, K. (2003). *Servant leadership theory: A theoretical model* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3082719)

Russell, R.F. (2001). The role of values in servant leadership. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal, 22*, 76-84.

Russell, R., & Stone, G.A. (2002). A review of servant leadership attributes: Developing a practical model. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal, 23*(3), 145-157.

Safwat, I. (1993). System of education in Kuwait. PIER world education series. Working Paper. Washington DC.

Satyaputra, A. (2013). Servant leadership for higher education. *Christian Education Journal, 10*(2), 483-486.

Story, M. (2002). A breakfast briefing that unscrambled Auckland's
road-jam: Leadership is about collaboration and making
connections. *New Zealand Management, 49*(9), 39-50.

Stone, A. G., Russell, R. F., & Patterson, K. (2004).
Transformational versus servant leadership: A difference in
leader focus. *Leadership and Organization Development
Journal, 25*(4), 349-361.

Stoten, W. (2013). Servant leadership in English sixth form colleges:
What do teachers tell us? *The International Journal of
Educational Management, 27*(4), 337-386.

Swindoll, C.R. (1981). *Improving your serve*. Dallas, TX: Word
Publishing.

Tangney, J.P. (2000). Humility: Theoretical perspectives, empirical
findings. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 19*, 70-82.

Winston, B. (2002). Be a leader for God's sake. Regent University-
School of Leadership Studies, Virginia Beach, VA.

Winter, D. G. (1988). The power motive in women and men. *Journal
of Personality and Social Psychology, 54*, 510-519. DOI:
10.1037/0022-3514.54.3.510

Dr. Iqbal AlShammari is the Associate Dean of College of Arts
& Sciences at Gulf University for Science & Technology
(GUST). She is also an Assistant Professor of Education at
GUST since 2011. In 2010, Dr. AlShammari received her Ph.
D. from Indiana State University; USA in the area of K-12
Educational Leadership, Administration & Foundations.
shammari.i@gust.edu.kw.

Dr. Florentina Halimi received her PhD in Applied Linguistics
form Vienna University in Austria. She is a recipient of the
Fulbright scholarship for post-doctoral studies and teaching as
a visiting professor at Fordham University, the Graduate

School of Education in New York, where she worked within several New York City Universities and schools. Dr. Halimi joined Gulf University for Science and Technology in 2015 as an assistant professor in the Department of English Education Program. halimi.f@gust.edu.kw.

Dr. Cathy Daniel is an Assistant Professor of Education at Gulf University for Science & Technology (GUST). In 2000, Dr. Daniel received her Ph.D. from Louisiana State University; USA in the area of Curriculum & Instruction. In the spring of 2006, Dr. Daniel joined Gulf University for Science and Technology as a faculty member teaching in GUST's Secondary English Education Program. danie.c@gust.edu.kw.

Dr. Meshari AlHusaini is an Associate Professor of Education at PAAET College of Basic Education. Dr. AlHusaini received his Ph. D. from Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State; USA in the area of Educational Leadership & Policy studies.