



RESEARCH-BASED MODELS OF SERVANT-LEADERSHIP: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

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Editor's note: This article is the second in a three-part series that will give a comprehensive literature review of the extant theory and research currently available on servant-leadership. In this second installment, scholar Jeff McClellan describes the attempts of various research studies to define and quantify the construct of servant-leadership.

If one wishes to measure, test, or research a phenomenon, especially in quantitative studies, it is essential that the phenomenon be carefully defined and operationalized in such a way that it can be measured. While this process is always challenging, some phenomena present particularly unique challenges due to their abstract and complex nature. For example, imagine trying to define and operationalize love, faith, courage, and other similar concepts. If one succeeds, the next challenge is greater still, as one must acquire broad-based support for his or her efforts in such a way that the construct becomes generally accepted. This is the challenge of developing research-based models of servant-leadership.

The challenge of defining servant-leadership began with the work of Greenleaf (2003). However, it was not Greenleaf's intent to develop a research model, but rather to advocate for a new conceptualization of leadership grounded in the intent of the leader to serve rather than to wield power or authority. This intent would then inspire the individual to choose to lead, but to do so in such a way that the process and act of leading would be fundamentally altered. Thus Greenleaf argued that such a leader would engage in leadership through initiative, goal development, listening/under-



standing, language and imagination, effective withdrawal resulting in creativity, acceptance and empathy, intuition and foresight, profound awareness and keen perception, persuasion over coercion, a strong awareness of self, patience, willingness to define one's own roles, healing and serving, and community building (Greenleaf, 1977).

Spears (1998), after reviewing the breadth of Greenleaf's writing, revised this list in his work to encompass ten characteristics: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community. These characteristic-based processes were intended to call would-be servant-leaders to engage in the journey of leading in a new way. They were not, however, intended to represent either exhaustive lists of characteristics and behaviors, or to become empirical constructs for research. Consequently, criticism and challenges have been levied against the conceptualization of servant-leadership because of its more evangelical call to serve.

This situation has led multiple theorists and researchers, in response to such critics and to expand the capacity of researchers in relation to servant-leadership, to develop a number of models to re-conceptualize servant-leadership as a viable research construct and to develop useful measurement tools. In this article the models of Farling, Stone, and Winston (1999), Laub (2005), Page and Wong (2000, 2003b), Russel and Stone (2002), Parolini (2004), Patterson (2003), Sendjaya (2003), van Dierendonck and Heeren (2006), Barbuto and Wheeler (2006), and Liden (2008) will be described and discussed.

Farling, Stone, and Winston's Model

Recognizing the need to develop a model of servant-leadership, Farling et al. (1999) reviewed the literature on servant-leadership and transformational leadership. In so doing they came to the conclusion that the two concepts were largely identical and that "servant leadership is a form of transformational leadership" (p. 52). Based on this claim, and the recognition that servant-leadership represents an identity-based approach to leader-



ship wherein the principles, beliefs, and values of the leader can be seen “in the behavior of the leader,” Farling and her cohorts proposed a model of servant-leadership (p. 53).

The model of Farling et al. (1999) conceptualized servant-leadership as a spiraling, iterative pillar of influence that is grounded in the visionary nature of the leader. They argue that vision is the influential force through which servant-leaders begin to move people and the organization and develop credibility, which represents the second spiral of influence. As a result of the credibility they possess, servant-leaders demonstrate integrity and are able to lubricate leader-follower relationships with trust, the third spiral of influence in the model. According to Farling et al., trust is manifested and strengthened via competence, reliability, openness, and concern (pp. 62-63), which lead to service, the final spiral of influence. Service is considered both the motivation and the means of leadership and thus contributes significantly to the vision of the leader. As a result, Farling et al. suggest that from service, the model cycles back to vision. In spite of the potential value of this model, neither Farling and her associates, nor other researchers have attempted to test its validity empirically.

Laub's Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA) Model

One of the first researchers to take on the challenge of empirically conceptualizing servant-leadership was Laub. In his research, Laub (2005) sought “to answer three key questions: How is servant leadership defined? What are the characteristics of servant leadership? Can the presence of these characteristics within organizations be assessed through a written instrument?” (p. 157). These questions were addressed using a Delphi survey wherein 14 experts on servant-leadership identified and rated the characteristics of servant-leaders on an interval scale from “necessary” to “essential.” As a result of this process, Laub developed the OLA Model, which he describes as follows:

According to this model, servant leadership is defined as an understand-



ing and practice of leadership that places the good of those led over the self-interest of the leader. In addition, servant leadership promotes the valuing and developing of people, the building of community, the practice of authenticity, the providing of leadership for the good of those led, and the sharing of power and status for the common good of each individual, the total organization, and those served by the organization. (p. 158)

Once this model was developed, Laub (1998) constructed an assessment to determine the extent to which an organizational environment embodies the characteristics and practices of servant-leadership. His studies confirmed the strong reliability of the instrument, as well as its validity (Laub, 2005, p. 159).

Page and Wong's Model

Building upon the ten characteristics prescribed by Spears (1998), Page and Wong developed a strong conceptual framework for servant-leadership, as well as a self-assessment and 360-degree profile instrument for use in research. These scholars began by defining the servant-leader “as a leader whose primary purpose for leading is to serve others by investing in their development and well-being for the benefit of accomplishing tasks and goals for the common good” (Page & Wong, 2000, p. 2). This definition strikes a balance between the paradoxical need to focus on the growth and development of others and the need to achieve results, which is part of the inherently contradictory nature of institutional leadership (Greenleaf, 2003).

Building upon this definition, Page and Wong (2000) proposed a model of servant-leadership that incorporates concentric circles. At the core of these circles is the character of the leader. As Page and Wong explained:

Leadership begins from within. Character is what kind of people we are. In servant leadership, this means a fundamental commitment to serving others with integrity and humility. It is placed at the core of the circles because everything else a leader does flows from this inner reality. . . .



Our motives stem from our character, which dictates what we do and how we lead. (pp. 2-3)

Radiating out from this motivational core, which Page and Wong refer to as “the servant’s heart,” are four circles that represent the relational, task, process, and role model aspects of the servant-leadership process (2000, p. 3). These four levels respectively address the following four objectives, and include the practices involved in pursuance of these objectives, of the servant-leader: (a) building up others, (b) doing the work of a leader, (c) improving organizational processes, and (d) impacting society and culture (p. 3). The nature of these levels and objectives is defined as follows:

No one can lead without having followers, as leaders must influence those around them to accomplish tasks. People-orientation describes how the servant-leader relates to others; it is concerned with the social emotional aspects of leadership. Having a people-orientation means more than people skills, because it involves having a heart for others and showing an interest in developing their potential.

Task-orientation is concerned with how a leader does his or her work. This includes the tasks and skills typically associated with management and leadership, such as initiating, decision-making, visioning, and implementing. Most research has identified people- and task-orientation as the two major dimensions of leadership. Process-orientation deals with how the servant-leader impacts organizational processes through modeling, team building, and open decision-making. Servant-leaders “walk the talk” and are accountable for what they do. They achieve institutional objectives by fostering a community spirit, seeking the common good as a prime motivation, seeing work as a partnership of service, and exercising good stewardship of resources. (p. 4)

Based on this model of servant-leadership, their review of the literature, and their experience, Page and Wong developed a list of 200 “descriptors of servant leadership” (p. 15). This list was then categorized. As these researchers explained, “This process of classification resulted in 12 distinct categories: Integrity, Humility, Servanthood, Caring for Others, Empower-



ing Others, Developing Others, Visioning, Goal Setting, Leading, Modeling, Team-Building, and Shared Decision-Making” (p. 15). These twelve categories were then organized by these authors into four orientations based on their model of concentric layers of the servant-leader. These included personality, relationship, task, and processes (p. 17).

Having thus constructed the measure, Page and Wong (2000) conducted a pilot study of its validity. While this study did not adhere to the rigorous standards of empirical inquiry, particularly given the non-random sample and small sample size, it did support the classification system and demonstrate the preliminary internal validity of the instrument in all of the areas except vision.

In a follow-up factor analysis of the 12 dimensions, with a sample population of 1157 participants, eight factors emerged. These included Leading, Servanthood, Visioning, Developing Others, Team-Building, Empowering Others, Shared Decision Making, and Integrity (Page & Wong, 2003b, p. 4). In addition to refining the factors, the authors also added two factors that represent barriers to the engagement of servant-leadership: authoritarian hierarchy and egotistical pride. These factors were added “because servant leadership is present only to the extent that power [associated with authoritarian hierarchy] and pride are absent” (Page & Wong, 2003a, p. 7). Following these revisions, Page and Wong retested the instrument. Eight factors again emerged. Though labeled differently, they are similar to the initial factors. They include developing and empowering others, power and pride (contrasted with vulnerability and humility), visionary leadership, servanthood, responsible leadership, integrity (honesty), integrity (authenticity), and courageous leadership (Page & Wong, 2003b).

It is worth mentioning that Page and Wong’s instrument was later tested by Dennis and Winston (2003). In contrast to the outcomes of Page and Wong, Dennis and Winston’s research determined “that Page and Wong’s instrument measures only three of the 12 purported factors” (p. 456). These three factors included service, empowerment, and vision. In spite of the important limitations of this study, the results indicated a need



for further efforts in validating the proposed factors of Page and Wong. Nonetheless, as Dennis and Winston explained, “this scale represents a potential tool with positive implications for training new and existing leaders” (p. 456).

In a later article, Wong (2004, Spring) indicated that follow-up work with the instrument revealed seven factors. These included empowering and developing others, power and pride, serving others, open and participatory leadership, inspirational leadership, visionary leadership, and courageous leadership. This structure was not, however, supported in a 2008 follow-up analysis of servant-leadership among athletic coaches done by Hammermeister, Burton, Pickering, Chase, Westre, and Baldwin. Using two separate, highly valid factor analyses procedures, Hammermeister et al. identified three factors among their population sample. They described the resulting factors as follows:

A highly consistent factor structure was evident across these techniques, with a three-factor solution emerging that accounted for 66.74% of the variance in the original items. Factor analysis of the 62-item RSLP [Servant Leadership Profile-Revised] revealed three major dimensions of servant-leadership. . . . Factor 1 included 11 items that were a mix of the RSLP subscales of “participatory leadership” (e.g., “My head coach is willing to accept others’ ideas, whenever they are better than his/her own”), “inspiration” (e.g., “My head coach is able to bring out the best in others”), and “courage” (e.g., “My head coach has the moral courage to do the right thing, even when it hurts him/her politically”). Thus, Factor 1 was labeled “trust/inclusion.” The second factor consisted of 6 of the original 8 items found on the RSLP “power and pride” subscale (e.g., “My head coach believes that to be a strong leader, he/she needs to have the power to do whatever he/she wants without being questioned”). The items on this subscale were subsequently reverse scored, thus prompting this factor to be termed “humility.” Finally, Factor 3 included 5 items that were related primarily to the “serving others” subscale (e.g., “My head coach finds enjoyment in serving others in whatever role or capacity”), and was subsequently labeled “service.” Alpha coefficients for the three factors ranged from .85 to .94, with a mean of .90. (p. 14)



Although these factors proved different from those identified by Page and Wong, Hammermeister et al. suggested that “they are similar to Page and Wong’s (2000) first three categories of integrity, humility, and servanthood, which were viewed as the characteristics which best describe a servant-leader” (p. 14). Thus, in spite of the inconsistent factorial outcomes using the RSLP, the validity of the instrument as a measure of servant-leadership remains strong. Nonetheless, research using the instrument should continue to strive to identify consistent factors. At the same time, it is worth considering the possibility that the inherently paradoxical and individualized nature of servant-leadership may make it difficult to develop a consistent measure for the concept.

Russell and Stone

Russell and Stone (2002) built on the initial work of Farling et al. To construct their model, they reviewed the literature on servant-leadership and identified all of the characteristics proposed by the various authors who have addressed the topic. As a result, they identified 20 variables, which they divided into two categories of attributes: functional and complementary. The nine functional attributes included vision, honesty, integrity, trust, service, modeling, pioneering, appreciation of others, and empowerment (p. 146). According to Russell and Stone, these attributes

are the operative qualities, characteristics, and distinctive features belonging to leaders and observed through specific leader behaviors in the workplace. . . . They are identifiable characteristics that actuate leadership responsibilities. Each functional attribute is distinct, yet they are all interrelated. In some cases, the attributes reciprocally influence one another. (p. 146)

In contrast, the complementary attributes “supplement and augment the functional attributes” (p. 147). They are not, however, to be considered of less importance or significance, but rather as complementary and in some cases “prerequisites to effective servant leadership” (p. 147). These attrib-



utes include communication, credibility, competence, stewardship, visibility, influence, persuasion, listening, encouragement, teaching, and delegation (pp. 146-147).

As a result of the relationship between these attributes, Stone and Russell (2002) suggested that the independent internal variables that drive servant-leadership are the values, core beliefs, and principles of the leader. These independent variables “incarnate through the functional attributes,” or dependent variables, “of the servant-leader” (p. 153). The relationship between these independent and dependent variables is moderated by the accompanying attributes. Thus, through expression of the accompanying attributes, servant-leaders engage in leadership representative of the functional attributes as an external manifestation of their internal values, core beliefs, and principles.

Unfortunately, although this model offered an expansive perspective on servant-leadership that appears to accurately reflect the relationship between the internal aspects of the leader and the external manifestations of servant-leadership and to delineate the attributes of servant-leadership, it suffers from several limitations.

First, the only research study conducted to test its validity focused solely on five of the attributes. In the study, Russell (2000) collected and analyzed responses from 167 leaders using the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) (Kouzes & Posner, 2001) and the Hall-Tonna Inventory of Values (HTIV) (Hall & Tonna, 1987). The results were grouped using the HTIV as a measure of servant-leadership into two groups: servant-leaders and non-servant-leaders. The mean scores of these leaders on the LPI were then analyzed to see whether there were statistically significant differences between the two groups regarding the attributes of vision, modeling, pioneering, appreciation of others, and empowerment. The results identified strong, significant support for visioning and pioneering, and mild support for modeling and appreciation of others. No statistical support was found for a difference in empowering behaviors among servant- and non-servant-leaders. Second, the values, beliefs, and principles delineated were non-spe-



cific and ambiguous, and finally, the overlapping constructs of the numerous attributes would likely make empirical validation difficult.

Parolini's Model

Parolini (2004) built on the work of Page and Wong, which focused on the characteristics of the servant-leader, and integrated it with Quinn's competing values framework, which identifies three competing values and four constructs of effectiveness focused on both complementary and competing ways of perceiving and engaging with an organizational system. The resulting model addresses the full process of servant-leadership, beginning with character and moving through process.

In so doing, Parolini (2004) proposed that

servant-leaders are defined by their ability to bring integrity, humility, and servanthood into caring for, empowering, and developing of others in carrying out the tasks and processes of visioning, goal setting, leading, modeling, team building, and shared decision-making. (p. 9)

The means whereby this is accomplished is described as follows:

Servant-leaders first prioritize human resources, then open systems and internal processes, and lastly, rational [*sic*] goals in bringing the best overall business performance, financial performance, and organizational effectiveness to their firms. (p. 9)

Unfortunately, while the two models Parolini integrated are well constructed, no research has been conducted to assess the validity of her model. Nonetheless, it provides some interesting and potentially useful insights regarding the construct of servant-leadership.

Patterson's Model

Patterson's (2003) model of servant-leadership is grounded in virtue theory and seeks to describe not only the nature of the servant-leader, but



also, and primarily, the process of servant-leadership. Consequently, she argued that “servant leadership encompasses seven virtuous constructs, which work in a processional pattern” (p. 2). These virtues include *agapao* love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service. Patterson proposed that these virtues build upon one another, beginning in the heart of the leader with *agapao* love, which nurtures and facilitates the virtues of humility and altruism. These virtues then become the foundation for vision and trust, which lead to empowerment and finally to service.

While this model offers a strong construct for understanding servant-leadership, Winston (2003) suggested that it is limited in its failure to recognize the interactional nature of leadership that occurs between leaders and followers. Given the support for this notion of partnership in the servant-leadership literature (Greenleaf, 1996; Kelley, 1998; Laub, 2004; Moxley, 2002), such a criticism was both valid and significant. Consequently, Winston offered the following as a suggested circular extension of the model:

The second half of the story occurs when the leader’s service results in a change in the follower’s sense of love. The follower’s *agapao* love results in an increase in both the commitment to the leader and the follower’s own self-efficacy. The higher levels of commitment and self-efficacy result in a higher level of intrinsic motivation that leads to a higher level of altruism toward the leader and the leader’s desire to see the organization do well. This leads to higher levels of service to the leader.
(p. 5)

Winston suggested that as a result of this increased service to the leader, the leader’s *agapao* love would increase, thus renewing the cycle. As this interactional servant-leadership process repeats itself, servant-leadership is strengthened. This dynamic leads to an increase in the overall maturity of the leader, the follower, and the relationship.

After further consideration of this partnership model, Cerf and Winston (2006) suggested and theoretically supported the assertion that hope, insofar as it contributes to the faith of the leader and follower in their ability



to achieve goals, represents an important element of the reciprocal servant-leadership process.

Although no empirical testing has been conducted to evaluate this extended model, Dennis and Borcarnea (2005) carefully constructed an instrument to assess the validity of Patterson's initial model and to contribute to the development of a tool for measuring servant-leadership. Their study, following initial construction and testing, accumulated 300 usable responses using an online survey. The results were compiled and evaluated using factor analysis. The results of this process validated Patterson's model in relation to the virtues of *agapao* love, humility, vision, and trust, but "failed to measure the factors of altruism and service" (p. 610). Consequently, Dennis and Borcarnea's research only partially supported Patterson's model. However, they do indicate that the failure to measure these variables may have resulted from the sampling methodology and the construction of the related items. Consequently, they suggest further research be conducted after these issues have been addressed.

Two additional extensions of Patterson's (2003) work have been conducted since Borcarnea's (2005) study. Lanctot and Irving (2007), working backwards from Patterson's virtue-based model, developed a servant-leadership virtue framework that focused on the character of individuals derived from integrity, discernment, love, respect, humility, diligence, temperance, and courage. (p. 11). In contrast, Spencer (2007) altered and expanded the model of Patterson (2003) as informed by Winston (2006) by reconstructing it to involve a process of *agapao* love that through humility and altruism, and in concert with hope and vision and trust and emotional intelligence, leads to commitment and empowerment, and finally to service (p. 8). This model is unique given that it introduces the variables of commitment and empowerment as servant-leadership process components. Unfortunately, Winston does not sufficiently define these variables so as to draw a solid connection; neither has any research been conducted to test his model.

In spite of the limitations discussed in relation to Patterson's (2003) model and Dennis and Borcarnea's (2005) instrument, their approach and



tool represent a potentially useful way of understanding and assessing servant-leadership, particularly if the variables of altruism and service can be identified. Further research on Winston's (2003), Cerf and Winston's (2006), Lactot and Irving's (2007), and Spencer's (2007) extended versions of Patterson's model is suggested as well.

Sendjaya's Model

Also recognizing the need to develop a solid research-based instrument to further the theoretical and empirical comprehension of servant-leadership, Sendjaya (2003, 2008) undertook a significant pilot research project to develop a statistically valid instrument for measuring servant-leadership behaviors. Using highly respected methodological procedures, Sendjaya (2003) began by conducting "semi-structured interviews with fifteen senior executives at various for-profit and not-for-profit organizations in Australia" (p. 2). These leaders were identified using purposive and snowball methods to insure that they possessed both theoretical knowledge and practical competence in relation to servant-leadership. Following the interviews, the content was carefully analyzed and compared with the literature to validate the data. As a result of this process, the following themes were identified: "Voluntary Subordination (VS), Authentic Self (AS), Covenantal Relationship (CR), Responsible Morality (RM), Transcendent Spirituality (TS), and Transforming Influence (TI)" (p. 3).

Having identified these themes, 101 assessment items were developed based on the literature. These items were then subjected to evaluation by a carefully selected panel of experts. This process led to the construction and pilot test of an assessment containing 88 items (Sendjaya, 2003).

The pilot study was conducted using 277 "postgraduate students at Monash University" (p. 6). The results were analyzed using Cronbach's coefficient alpha, which revealed internal consistency on all of the factors. In addition, correlation outcomes demonstrated statistically significant correlational relationships between the items. This initial evaluation validated the internal consistency as well as the close relationship between these



themes, thereby indicating that they are closely related under a larger theme (servant-leadership) (Sendjaya, 2003, 2008).

Having validated the construct at this broader level, the researcher then conducted an exploratory factor analysis of the individual items. The results at this level, however, proved inconclusive. Sendjaya (2003) noted that this may have resulted from the analytical procedure employed by the researcher. Thus, while this instrument demonstrates broad level validity, further research is necessary to validate its ongoing use in research studies.

van Dierendonck and Heeren's Model

One of the most recent models of servant-leadership was developed by van Dierendonck and Heeren (2006). Their model proposes that servant-leadership is grounded in the self-determination and intrinsic motivation of the individual and in awareness and reliance upon his or her personal resources. Drawing upon research in these areas and in correlation with the literature on servant-leadership, they propose that one's sense of self-determination is derived from his or her experience of competence, autonomy, and relatedness. With regard to personal resources, they argue that the essential resources of the servant-leader include inner strength, passion, and intuition. These personal resources combined with self-determination form the interior, motivational aspects of servant-leadership.

These internal elements are then expressed externally at three behavioral levels: the level of personal strengths, the interpersonal level, and the organization level. These levels are grounded in Page and Wong's model and have been re-conceptualized to facilitate measurement (van Dierendonck & Heeren, 2006).

The first level, personal strengths, identifies integrity, authenticity, courage, objectivity, and humility as the external manifestations of the servant-leader's character. The second level argues that servant-leaders influence others through empowerment and emotional intelligence. Finally, the organizational level involves the exercise of stewardship and conviction (van Dierendonck & Heeren, 2006). While this model promises to provide a



better framework for measuring servant-leadership, the instrument that has been developed by van Dierendonck and Heeren (2006) is currently undergoing further refinement and testing.

Barbuto and Wheeler's Model

Another recently developed research-based model of servant-leadership is that of Barbuto and Wheeler (2006). Like their predecessors, these researchers were concerned by the lack of solid, empirically-based “theoretical underpinnings” and valid instruments available to measure servant-leadership (p. 301). In this vein, they wrote,

Despite several conceptual papers on the topic of servant leadership, there is no consensus construct for empirical research. Most papers have standalone qualities, but the work to date has not evolved, with seemingly more differentiation than integration in the literature. (p. 304)

As a result, they engaged in an in-depth review of the literature, focusing not only on the concept of servant-leadership, primarily as it is conceived by Greenleaf (1977, 2003) and Spears (2002, 1995), but also on its relationship with similar constructs, such as leader-member exchange theory (LMX) and transformational leadership. Based on this review, they proposed a conceptual framework consisting of eleven characteristics. This framework “combines the 10 characteristics of Spears with the dimension calling—the natural desire to serve others, which was fundamental to leadership in the early writings of Greenleaf” (p. 304). They then developed operational definitions and scales, “including five to seven sample items . . . for each of the 11 characteristics” to measure these characteristics (p. 309). The items were then reviewed by a panel of experts (11), revised, and reviewed again by a smaller panel (5) to insure face validity. When this process was completed, the instrument was tested, via a 360-degree surveying methodology, on “a sample of 80 elected community leaders and 388 raters from counties in the Midwestern United States” (p. 310).



With regard to the actual distribution of the surveys, Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) explained:

Data were collected from an intact group of elected officials as part of a full-day leadership training seminar for members of an association that sponsors annual professional development programs for its members. The sample is appropriate for studying servant leadership because the role of these elected officials was to serve their communities in public office. Participants filled out the self-report version of the servant leadership instrument 4 weeks prior to the workshop and the self-report version of the multi-leadership behavior questionnaire (MLQ) at the workshop. Each participant was asked to solicit between four and six raters to complete a similar battery of instruments, consisting of the rater version of the servant leadership instrument, the rater version of the MLQ, and the rater version of the LMX-7. Responses to the MLQ and LMX-7 measures were collected to assess the convergent validity between similar constructs. (p. 310)

Once completed, the surveys were compiled and analyzed using factor analysis. The results indicated strong support for five rather than eleven critical servant-leadership characteristics. These included “altruistic calling, emotional healing, wisdom, persuasive mapping, and organizational stewardship” (p. 311). These results both proved statistically valid and demonstrated strong internal consistency.

Having identified these key components of servant-leadership, Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) sought to verify the predictive validity of the measure by testing the correlational relationship between the five servant-leadership subscales and the variables of “motivation to perform extra work, employee satisfaction, and perceptions of organizational effectiveness” (p. 314) as measured by the Multi-Leadership Behavior Questionnaire (Bass, 1985). As a result of the analysis, the researchers delineated the results as follows:

Results indicated that self-reported servant leadership subscales correlated positively with each of the three positive outcome variables. Organizational stewardship had the strongest relationship with extra effort.



Wisdom and organizational stewardship had the strongest relationships with employee satisfaction. Organizational stewardship had the strongest relationship with perceptions of organizational effectiveness.

For the rater-report subscales, the strongest relationship for employees' motivation to perform extra work was with wisdom. The strongest relationship for employees' satisfaction was with emotional healing. The strongest relationship for perceptions of organizational effectiveness was with organizational stewardship. Each of the subscales shared positive relationships with each of the three positive outcome variables. (pp. 314-315)

Thus, not only did Barbuto and Wheeler develop an instrument that appears to effectively measure servant-leadership, but they also demonstrated the connection between servant-leadership and organizational outcomes.

Liden's Model

In 2008, another research model and instrument were developed by Liden (2008) as a means of conceptualizing and measuring servant-leadership. Drawing upon the work of previous scale developers and based upon the assumption of a relational nature of servant-leadership, Liden conducted a review of the literature and with a team of colleagues identified nine factors including relationships, creating value for the community, empowering, helping subordinates grow and succeed, behaving ethically, conceptual skills, putting subordinates first, emotional healing, and servanthood. A scale was then developed to measure these nine factors.

Once developed, the scale was tested in both a pilot study and a full scale study. The pilot study consisted of 298 undergraduate students (Liden, 2008). The results were carefully analyzed and "an exploratory factor analysis resulted in the emergence of seven distinguishable factors" (p. 166). These included conceptual skills, empowerment, helping subordinates grow and succeed, putting subordinates first, behaving ethically, emotional healing, and creating value for the community. The full scale study involved



164 employees in a “Midwestern production and distribution company” (p. 165). The results of the study were likewise supportive of the seven-factor model. Furthermore, like Barbuto and Wheeler (2006), Liden also used the instrument to test the relationship between servant-leadership and organizational outcomes.

Obviously Liden’s (2008) measure represents a significant contribution to the attempt to measure and conduct quantitative research in relation to servant-leadership. At the same time, he did not develop a full-scale conceptual model of servant-leadership that accompanies the instrument. Nonetheless, this measure has tremendous potential if it can be further tested and validated.

It is evident from this discussion of the literature on research-oriented models of servant-leadership that much work has been done to conceptualize this paradoxical leadership theory. Unfortunately, this heavy focus has limited the amount of research that has been conducted to assess the utility of servant-leadership.

CONCLUSION

Scholars such as those delineated above have made exceptional strides toward the empirical conceptualization of servant-leadership. This effort will no doubt lead to a greater expansion of the research regarding the processes and outcomes of servant-leadership. To a large extent, this is wonderful. At the same time, one must question whether a concept such as servant-leadership, which is inherently ambiguous and context-oriented in practice, can ever be sufficiently defined so as to be accurately measured and assessed. Nonetheless, the effort is one to applaud and encourage as the long-term, broadly supported relevance of the construct may hinge on the extent to which it can be demonstrated to produce the kinds of results that are expected from this kind of leadership. At the same time, the growth in popularity of servant-leadership and its anecdotal outcomes have already expanded the popularity of servant-leadership in such a way that it is becoming more and more widely recognized and accepted. It is the hope of



this author that the art, science, and practice of servant-leadership will continue to expand and that the resultant transformation of society will be something akin to what Greenleaf hoped for. To all those seeking to do this in whatever way they can, I salute you and wish you the best in your effort.

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