



## SERVANT-LEADERSHIP AND PSYCHOLOGICAL HARDINESS

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The multitude of changes occurring in society increasingly call upon leaders to engage in more participative, servant-oriented approaches to leadership. At the same time, these changes are likely increasing the stress and strain that leaders face on a daily basis. Thus, those who would answer the call to serve and lead face the challenge of withstanding the pressures of the day. This research study explores this challenge by testing the relationship between self-perceived psychological hardiness and servant-leadership within the context of a public institution of higher education. If a strong positive relationship exists between these variables, then this may further support the validity of servant-leadership as a model for effectively leading institutions in today's high-change, high-stress society.

### TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP

Traditional notions of leadership within organizations have focused on what leaders do to accomplish results (McGee-Cooper and Looper 2001). This model argues that effective leadership involves acquiring the skills necessary to get followers to perform in ways that further the organization's goals and objectives. While this model of leadership may use more democratic methods for accomplishing goals, such methods are typically incorporated as a means to an end. Therefore, they may be pushed aside when they do not meet the immediate needs of the moment, or when the leader becomes sufficiently stressed (Arbinger Institute 2000; Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee 2002; Irving and Longbotham 2006; Lore 1998). Thus, the primary tactics of traditional leaders are often command and control oriented and skills focused as opposed to character-based (Covey 1989).

At its best, this approach to leadership accomplishes results. At its worst, however, it is "clearly manipulative, even deceptive, encouraging people to



use techniques to get other people to like them” and to follow (Covey 1989, 19). This emphasis on skill development “provides a structure that is very consistent with the curricula of most leadership education programs...[that] have traditionally taught classes in problem solving, conflict resolution, listening, and team work” as well as other leadership skill sets (Northouse 2004, 51). While these skills are important, simply understanding and using them within the construct of the traditional leadership model is becoming less and less relevant and effective (McGee-Cooper and Looper 2001). This is largely due to major social changes altering the context of leadership, thereby increasing the amount of stress and strain placed on leaders and, consequently, furthering the need for psychological hardiness.

### *Our Changing World*

At present, a number of social forces are driving rapid, revolutionary changes that are altering both our work and personal lives. These forces include the rise of the global economy, the emergence of the information society, the changing nature of the workplace, technological advances, shifting demographics, and, of course, economic instability (Adams 1998; Bridges 1996; Jarvis 2000; McNair 2001; Merricks 2001; Vanscoy 2000; Work 1996). These forces also impact leaders and the stress and strain they experience by increasing competition and diversity, altering the expectations of followers, diminishing job security and stability, and forcing leaders to engage in ongoing learning, development, and change (Jupp 2002; Khoshaba and Maddi 2005; Knowles, Holton III, and Swanson 1998; McNair 2001; Senge 1990; Tey 2006; Vanscoy 2000).

### *Leadership and Stress*

As numerous authors have explained, leadership roles have always existed within a high stress context (Fassel 1998; Lambert, Lambert, and Yamase 2003; Quinn 1996; Stieglitz 1998; Sturnick 1998; Wilde, Ebberts, Shelley, and Gmelch 2003). The causes of workplace stress include lack of supervisory support, role ambiguity, stressful work relationships, work/life balance, career development, organizational structure and climate, work overload and underload, lack of autonomy, constant scrutiny, and information overload combined with mental fatigue (Clark and Cooper 2000; Cooper 1984; Goleman et al. 2002; Khoshaba and Maddi 2005; Lindorff 2001; Restak 2001;



J. L. Smith 2002; Steinhardt, Dolbier, Gottlieb, and McCallister 2003). The negative effects of these stressors on leadership include, but are not limited to, diminished job satisfaction, low morale, illness and disease, cultural contamination through emotional contagion, hampered learning capacity and memory, psychological disorders such as panic attacks and depression, mental illness, decreased perceived meaningfulness, and diminished performance (Bartone and Adler 1998; Boyatzis and McKee 2005; Cooper 1984; Goleman 1995; Goleman et al. 2002; Howard 2000; Jensen 1998; Khoshaba and Maddi 2005; Lansisalmi, Peiro, and Kivimaki 2000; LeDoux 1996; Restak 2001; Steinhardt et al. 2003; Westman 1990). These symptoms of burnout are augmented by the dramatic social changes previously delineated.

### *Servant-Leadership*

As forces for change accelerate and workplace stress increases, it becomes more difficult to simply use “techniques” of leadership, which may have worked in the past, to accomplish organizational goals. Quinn explained, “There are people who know how to lead...yet they cannot bring themselves to initiate the process. There is no energy left. They are victims of burnout” (Quinn 1996, 20). In such situations, leaders cannot depend solely on their skills to succeed. They must achieve a higher level of leadership capacity that incorporates not only what the leader does, but who the leader is. Quinn argued, “To turn this situation around, for the healing process to begin, people must engage in deep personal change” (ibid., 21). This need for change calls upon leaders to engage in more character-based forms of leadership, such as charismatic leadership (B. N. Smith, Montagno, and Kuzmenko 2004) authentic leadership (Luthans and Avolio 2003; Pielstick 2000), ethical leadership (Northouse 2004), spiritual leadership (Northouse 2004; Thompson 2000), transformational leadership (Antonakis, Cianciolo, and Sternberg 2004; Northouse 2004; B. N. Smith et al. 2004), and servant-leadership (Greenleaf 1977; B. N. Smith et al. 2004; Spears 1998a).

While all these leadership models share similar stylistic approaches, servant-leadership is unique in its primary focus on serving all the individuals impacted by an organization in their efforts to grow and develop through the process of achieving organizational objectives (Greenleaf 1977; B. N. Smith et al. 2004; Stone, Russell, and Patterson 2003). This distinction has been demonstrated both theoretically and through empirical studies (Liden, Wayne, Zhao, and Henderson 2008; van Dierendonck



and Nuijten 2011). In contrast, many of the other forms of leadership discussed previously emphasize the achievement of organizational objectives as the primary focus of leadership, overemphasize the role of the leader, and view the development of others as a means to accomplishing these goals (B. N. Smith et al. 2004; van Dierendonck 2011).

The term *servant-leadership* was coined by Robert Greenleaf in his essay, *The Servant-Leader*. As a result of his religious, philosophical, organizational, and experiential background and through the inspiration that came to him as a result of reading Hesse's *Journey to the East*, Greenleaf proposed that leadership had less to do with oversight, position, and direction and more to do with service. He wrote, "The great leader is seen as Servant-first, and that simple fact is the key to his greatness" (Greenleaf 1977, 21). This servanthood is grounded, not merely in the behaviors of the leader as servant, but rather in "a natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first." (ibid., 27). As a result of this deep, internal desire to contribute to the growth of others, "conscious choice brings [one] to aspire to lead" (ibid.). Once this choice is made, servant-leaders lead, "but there is a special quality to this—the quality of service....It is in serving that they gain the respect of others who know that the Servant-carries their interests in mind" (Young 2002, 250–51).

The difference in motivation to lead contributes to an altered approach to leadership. While many models have been developed to conceptualize this approach, beginning with and based upon the work of Greenleaf (2002) and Spears (2002), no universally accepted model of servant-leadership has been developed (Barbuto Jr. and Wheeler 2006; Farling, Stone, and Winston 1999; Laub 2005; Liden et al. 2008; Page and Wong 2000, 2003b; Parolini 2004; Patterson 2003; Russell and Stone 2002; Sendjaya 2003; van Dierendonck and Heeren 2006). However, in reviewing the various models, van Dierendonck (2011), identified the six characteristics that are consistent across virtually all of these. These include empowering and developing others, humility, authenticity, interpersonal acceptance, providing direction, and stewardship. These approaches overlap with some other models of leadership, but as a whole are unique to servant-leadership.

Both the motivational and procedural uniqueness of servant-leadership contribute to its relevance and demanding nature. Because of the sincere desire of the leader to serve and care for others, he or she is more likely to be respected while engaging in practices of leadership, even though sometimes his or her decisions may not be popular. At the same time, however, this





call to other-focused service is not an easy one. Retaining an active concern for all individual persons, whom one serves, requires tremendous emotional energy (Foster 2000, 139) and compels leaders to accept significant challenges as part of their choice to engage in servant-leadership (Tarr 1995). Tutu (1999) suggested that it may even involve deep suffering. Given the barriers that servant-leaders often face in attempting to implement servant-leadership, this is not surprising (Foster 2000; Savage-Austin and Honeycutt 2011).

As Greenleaf explained, “Stress is a condition of most of modern life, and if one is a servant-leader and carrying the burdens of other people—going out ahead to show the way, one takes the rough and tumble (and it really is rough and tumble in some leader roles)” (Greenleaf 1977, 39). Part of this burden is due to the inherent challenges involved in making decisions that influence others. Greenleaf wrote about “two separate ‘anxiety’ processes” related to decision making. “One is the anxiety of holding the decision until as much information as possible is in. The other is the anxiety of making the decision when there really isn’t enough information....All of this is complicated by pressures building up from those who want an answer (ibid., 37).

These pressures, amplified by the demand for “unlimited liability,” combine with the inherent stressors of leadership to create uniquely stressful challenges for servant-leaders. As a result, there is much in the literature on Servant-leadership calling for serving oneself to better serve others (Beazley and Beggs 2002; Greenleaf 1977; Spears 1998c; Spears and Noble 2005). Thus, Greenleaf (1996a) argued that leaders must be strong, which he defined as capable of being able to compose oneself and make difficult decisions amidst stress and to “maintain serenity in the face of uncertainty” (Kyker 2003, 22). This requires psychological hardiness. As he declared, “confidence in a leader rests, in part, on the assurance that stability, poise, and resilience under stress give adequate strength for the rigor of [servant-leadership]” (Greenleaf 1996b, 23).

### *Psychological Hardiness*

Psychological hardiness refers to the ability of individuals to mitigate the negative results of stressors and strain as a result of the personality characteristics of commitment, control, and challenge. These characteristics are developed and expressed through transformational coping as well as through



positive social support and healthful living (Khoshaba and Maddi 2005; Maddi and Kobasa 1984).

The personality characteristics of commitment, control, and challenge are attitudinal in nature. Maddi defined these characteristic in the following terms:

If you are strong in commitment, you want to stay involved with the people and events going on around you, as that seems the best way to find what is experientially interesting and meaningful....If you are strong in control, you want to struggle to have an influence on the outcomes going on around you, even if this may seem difficult in certain circumstances.... Furthermore, if you are strong in challenge, you find the process of continuing to learn from your experiences, whether they are positive or negative, developmentally fulfilling. (Maddi 2004, 286)

When combined, these attitudinal elements both complement and temper one another, thereby facilitating the reframing of challenges in positive ways so as to better deal with them (Maddi 2004). This allows leaders to see themselves, others, and their environment in a more positive, involved, caring way that fosters greater spiritual, mental, and emotional health.

According to Khoshaba and Maddi (2005; 2005), those who possess the characteristics of commitment, control, and challenge seek to proactively engage stressors with a strong belief in the value of the endeavor and in their ability to effect changes. In addition, they do not view failure and/or setbacks as defeat, but rather as opportunities to learn. Because of this constructive perspective, they do not shy away from engagement. Instead, when stressors arise, they seek to better understand them, embrace them, and actively strive to overcome them. This proactive manner of engaging challenges is known as transformational or hardy coping because it represents a resilient, positive approach to reframing challenges as opportunities for growth and change.

This positive means of coping stands in sharp contrast to what hardiness researchers refer to as regressive coping (Khoshaba and Maddi 2005; Maddi and Khoshaba 2005). Regressive coping includes any practice that involves avoiding the problem, engaging in activities that simply distract one from problems, disregarding the value of human relationships, or fighting against the problem in ways that amplify the problem rather than to solving it (Maddi and Khoshaba 2005).

Hardiness also promotes social support and healthful living practices. Social support consists of the fostering and use of positive social



relationships to assist individuals in overcoming challenges and accomplishing goals. It also deals with conflict resolution (Maddi and Khoshaba 2005). Healthful living practices include “relaxation, nutrition, and physical activity” (Maddi 2004, 294). Both represent strategies for effectively coping with stressors. When combined with transformational coping practices, and the characteristics of commitment, control, and challenge these have been demonstrated to mitigate the negative impact of stressors within a variety of contexts (Maddi and Khoshaba 2005). In addition, this combination of hardy attitudes and behaviors is well aligned with the “search for wholeness” that is fundamental to the theory and practice of servant-leadership (Greenleaf 1977, 50).

#### OVERVIEW OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH

After a careful review of the literature on servant-leadership and hardiness, no research studies appear to verify the existence of a relationship between these two models. Nonetheless, some related studies have been conducted that suggest the potential for such a relationship and support the need for this study.

In his seminal book on great organizations, Collins suggested that a relationship may exist between level-five leadership, a style of leadership similar in some ways to servant-leadership (Hamilton and Knoche 2007) and the “hardiness factor” (Collins 2001, 82). Kouzes and Posner (1995) also suggested hardiness was an essential component of effective leadership. In a related study, Isaacs (2003) identified significant relationships between many of the sub-elements of resilience and the practices of effective leaders, based on Kouzes and Posner’s (1995) model and Connor’s (in Isaacs 2003) elements of resilience.

Additional related studies have been conducted that explore the relationship between hardiness and leadership in military settings. Westman (1990) identified a strong relationship between hardiness and performance outcomes of military officers in training. In a related study of predictors of leadership effectiveness, hardiness did not prove to predict the emergence or effectiveness of leaders; however, it was found that high emergence leaders possessed significantly higher levels of hardiness than low emergence leaders. Furthermore, hardiness was strongly correlated with many of the variables that predicted both emergence, as determined by rank attained, and effectiveness (Atwater, Dionne, Avolio, Camobreco, and Lau 1999). Another study, focused on small-unit cohesion under stress, suggested



no relationship between hardiness and leadership effectiveness (Bartone, Johnsen, Eid, Brun, and Laberg 2002).

The inconsistent outcomes of such studies suggest that hardiness may be related to only certain forms of leadership. In fact, Revenson and Cassel (1991) found that hardiness was significantly correlated with some kinds of leadership, but not with others. Furthermore, Maddi, Harvey, Khoshaba, Lu, Persico, and Brow (2006) found that hardiness was negatively related to right-wing authoritarianism but positively correlated with innovativeness. Thus, while it seems that the relationship between hardiness and leadership is inconsistent, at best, there is evidence that hardiness and servant-leadership may be more closely related, which supports the need for this study.

#### SAMPLING AND METHODOLOGY

To examine the potential relationship between perceived psychological hardiness and servant-leadership, this study surveyed 207 formal and informal leaders from among the ranks of the faculty, administrators, and professional academic advisors at a public institution of higher education in the intermountain west. Since the purpose of this study was to assess the nature of the relationship between servant-leadership and psychological hardiness among leaders, it was essential that a sample be selected that made it possible to “focus on a part of the target population for additional analysis” (Henry 1990, 49). Consequently, this study used nonprobability sampling to focus on “particular members of the population that comprise the sample, rather than the population” (ibid., 23). This was done by asking individuals at the institution to identify leaders who demonstrate servant-leadership qualities based on the theoretical model of servant-leadership of Page and Wong and Greenleaf (See Appendix A). Forty five individuals were identified using this method.

In addition to this intentional sampling, the researcher also randomly selected participants who held positions of leadership within the institution by acquiring lists of all those individuals with supervisory responsibilities, academic and support advisors, and faculty. In total, 162 individuals were selected randomly from these populations. The total sample size was 207. The reason for selecting this number of participants was, as Fowler explained, “Precision increases rather steadily up to sample sizes of 150 to 200. After that point, there is much more modest gain from increasing the sample size” (Fowler 2002, 36). Indeed, “A sample of 150 people will describe a population of 15,000 or 15 million with virtually the same degree



of accuracy, assuming that all other aspects of the sample design and sampling procedures are the same" (ibid., 35). The groups of individuals selected, supervisors, advisors, and faculty represented different forms of leadership as a result of their differing roles within the institution. Nonetheless, each of these groups has been discussed in the literature as a relevant population for emergence and/or exploration of servant-leadership (Greenleaf 2003; McClellan 2007; Powers and Moore 2005).

Of the 207 to whom the surveys were distributed, 151 responded. These leaders received and completed the Personal Views Survey III-R (PVS III-R) (*Personal Views Survey: Third Edition Revised* 2003), which measures perceived hardiness and the Revised Servant-leadership Profile (RSLP) (Page and Wong 2004). The PVS III-R is an instrument that has been revised and validated to measure both the general characteristic of hardiness and the component variables of commitment, control, and challenge (Maddi et al. 2006; Maddi and Khoshaba 2001).

The Revised Servant-leadership Profile developed by Page and Wong (2000) was used to measure servant-leadership. This instrument consists of sixty-two questions. The questions measure the respondent's level of agreement, using a seven-point scale, in response to questions that are carefully constructed to measure (1) developing and empowering others, (2) power and pride, (3) authentic leadership, (4) open, participatory leadership, (5) inspiring leadership, (6) visionary leadership, and (7) courageous leadership. All questions are phrased positively, including those designed to measure power and pride. Ultimately, servant-leaders can be identified as those who score high on the positive aspects of the test, but low on the negative elements (power and pride).

Scores on the RSLP were generated using the authors' categorical scoring instrument, which has demonstrated mixed results validity in previous studies (Dennis and Winston 2003; Page and Wong 2000, 2003a, 2003b; Rude 2004). In addition, and to better meet the needs of this study, a method of tabulating an overall score that identifies servant-leaders as opposed to those with alternative approaches to leadership was developed based on the theory underlying the Page and Wong instrument (McClellan 2008). This approach involved summing the average scores of the positive component variables and then adding in the reverse scored average the negative variable of pride and power. Based on the test's structure and design, those individuals who score a 5 or higher in relation to each of the component variables would be considered servant-leaders. Those who score lower in one or more



areas would be considered to possess a style of leadership other than that of a servant-leader. To test the reliability of this scoring structure, the intercorrelations of the scores in relation to the component variables were analyzed and validated using Cronbach Alpha ( $\alpha = .885$ ).

#### INSTRUMENT SCORES

##### *PVS III-R*

The PVS III-R is scored by the Hardiness Institute, which provides researchers with the resultant scores. As a for profit institution, the Hardiness Institute does not provide information to researchers regarding the scoring protocols, therefore, additional information regarding scoring is not available. Furthermore, while information is available regarding reliability and validity, mean scores from previous studies were not obtainable nor does the hardiness institute provide this data. The descriptive statistics for these scores are summarized in Table 1.

#### DATA ANALYSIS

The primary research question addressed by this study was whether or not a statistically significant, positive relationship exists between servant-leadership and psychological hardiness as measured by the Revised Servant-leadership Profile (RSLP) and the Personal Values Scale III-R (PVS III-R). This study also sought to determine whether or not servant-leaders demonstrate higher levels of hardiness than those with alternative approaches to leadership.

Table 1

*Descriptive Statistics of Servant-Leader Component Variables*

Component Variable	n	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Commitment	152	7	18	14.13	2.29
Control	152	6	18	13.67	2.01
Challenge	152	5	18	12.94	2.57
Hardiness	152	19	51	40.73	5.85
Valid N (Listwise)	152				



To address the first question, the composite and component scores of both hardiness and servant-leadership were analyzed using Spearman's rho correlation analysis. These correlations were run using the composite score of servant-leadership (servant-leadership composite score) and the servant-leadership scores of both those who were identified as servant-leaders (only servant-leader scores) and those who were not (other than servant-leader scores). The results are shown in Table 2.

Nearly all of the correlation values between servant-leadership composite and component scores achieved significance at the .05 level and beyond. In every case the size of these correlations was small to moderate based on Cohen's classification of ".10, .30, .50 [as] "small," "medium," and "large" values for  $r$ " (Cohen 1988, 532).

Table 2  
*Spearman's Rho Correlation Scores between Hardiness and Servant-Leadership among All Respondents ( $n = 149-151$ ) as Compared to Scores of Those Identified as Servant-Leaders ( $n = 85$ ) and Those Identified as Other Than Servant-Leaders ( $n = 63$ )*

	Commitment	Control	Challenge	Hardiness
Developing and empowering others	.39**	.28**	.37**	.43**
Power and pride	-.36**	-.11	-.30**	-.32**
Humility and vulnerability	.36**	.11	.30**	.32**
Authentic leadership	.23**	.25**	.25**	.28**
Open/participatory leadership	.41**	.30**	.38**	.45**
Inspiring leadership	.41**	.30**	.38**	.45**
Visionary leadership	.42**	.25**	.42**	.45**
Courageous leadership	.24**	.26**	.36**	.34**
Servant-leadership composite score	.47**	.28**	.45**	.50**
Only servant-leader scores	.40**	.21	.38**	.42**
Only other than servant-leader scores	.03	.06	.10	.09

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level 2-tailed.

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level 2-tailed.



In contrast to the small to moderate scores regarding the relationship between servant-leadership and hardiness among most of the variables, stand the scores associated with those who demonstrate alternate leadership style preferences. For both sample sets, total and just randomly selected, no significant correlation appears to exist between these styles of leadership and hardiness or any of its component variables.

Finally, to determine to what extent servant-leaders differed in hardiness from those with alternate stylistic preferences, scores regarding hardiness means for both groups were tabulated and compared using t-tests. The results revealed highly significant differences in commitment, control, challenge, and hardiness scores, at the .01 alpha level with servant-leaders scoring higher in all cases. These results are displayed in Table 3.

#### DISCUSSION

Is there a statistically significant, positive relationship between servant-leadership and psychological hardiness as measured by the Revised Servant-leadership Profile (RSLP) and the Personal Values Scale III-R (PVS III-R)? Based on the results of this study, the response to this question is yes. Nearly

Table 3  
*Mean Differences in Hardiness between Servant-Leaders (n = 85) and Those with Alternate Leadership Styles (n = 63)*

		t-test for Equality of Means			
		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	<i>Std. Error Difference</i>
Commitment	Equal variances assumed	5.49	146	.00	1.93
Control	Equal variances assumed	2.90	146	.00	.95
Challenge	Equal variances assumed	4.61	146	.00	1.87
Hardiness	Equal variances assumed	5.23	146	.00	4.74





all of the correlation values between servant-leadership composite and component scores achieved significance at the .05 or .01 level with both the component and composite hardiness scores of participants.

In every case, the size of these correlations was small to moderate based on Cohen's classification of ".10, .30, .50 [as] "small," "medium," and "large" values for  $r$ " (Cohen 1988, 532). In the case of the relationship between hardiness and composite servant-leader scores, this relationship reached .50 based on rounding ( $r_s = .496$ ). At the same time, Cohen stated that in social science research where multiple variables impact relationships, which is certainly the case with complex phenomena such as servant-leadership and hardiness, these scores may be considered good indicators of an important relationship (Cohen 1988).

This argument is particularly relevant given the relatively high correlation between composite servant-leadership scores and hardiness ( $r_s = .50$ ) as well as the obvious distinction between the significant, moderate relationship between servant-leaders' scores and lack of such a relationship among those with alternate leadership approaches. The existence of significantly higher hardiness scores among servant-leaders, as revealed in the group difference analysis, further strengthens the argument that servant-leadership and hardiness are positively related in some important way, and suggests servant-leaders demonstrate higher levels of hardiness than those with differing stylistic approaches. The nature of these relationships is not clear from this study. However, based on the literature, the following possibilities may be worth exploring in future explanatory studies.

First, hardiness may prove to be a characteristic of servant-leaders that has not been adequately explored. This suggestion is based on the fact that much of the literature on servant-leadership suggests the need for some means of dealing with the stress of leading in this fashion that is consistent with the construct of hardiness (Foster 2000; Greenleaf 1977, 1996a, 1996b; Kouzes and Posner 1995; Kyker 2003).

Servant-leaders and hardy persons may also possess a common underlying personality characteristic or belief system that supports the existence of both. Greenleaf's discussion of initiative and the importance of choosing to lead out of a will to serve (Greenleaf 1977) and the theoretical foundation of hardiness in existential philosophy and psychology, which advocates for a proactive approach to embracing the future with respect for self and others (Greenleaf 1996a; Kobasa and Maddi 1984; Maddi 2004; May 1961), may suggest at least a possible underlying philosophical similarity.



Likewise, both constructs advocate for a relationship first approach to influencing or leading others grounded in a commitment to valuing oneself and others (Greenleaf 1977; Khoshiba and Maddi 2005; Page and Wong 2000). Furthermore, Greenleaf's (1977) description of servant-leadership is well aligned with the "values scheme" suggested by Bottom and Lenz as underlying a lifestyle pattern of persons who "are able to cope with stress without physical or psychological damage" (Bottom and Lenz 1998, 161).

It may also be that some servant-leaders have developed hardiness as a result of the need to possess both characteristics in today's fast paced, stressful society. Likewise, the opposite may also be true; some hardy persons may choose servant-leadership. If this is the case, then it would be important to identify what variables contribute to these decisions, and whether or not these choices contribute to increase effectiveness as leaders and servant-leaders. At this point, the state of the literature does not suggest any clues regarding what these variables might be. At the same time, the higher correlation scores between hardiness and visionary leadership, inspiring leadership, open/participatory leadership and developing and empowering others may suggest that these are the characteristics either hardy persons possess that may lead them to approach servant-leadership or that servant-leaders may possess, which contribute to their hardiness. More research is needed here.

Another possibility is that a strong sense of purpose contributes to the emergence of both servant-leadership and hardiness. Greenleaf believed that the foundation of Servant-leadership was *entheos*, or spirit (Greenleaf 1996a, 1998, 2003; Spears 1998b). *Entheos*, he argued, is the "basic spiritual essence" (Greenleaf 1996a, 82), "the power actuating one who is inspired" (Greenleaf 1998a, 117), and "the essence that makes a constructive life possible" (ibid., 118). As this essence grows, a strong sense of purpose emerges. Greenleaf wrote, "There is a growing sense of overriding purpose in all that is undertaken" (Greenleaf 1996a, 84). At the same time, he also argued that this same enlivening essence, and the resulting purposefulness, "is the sustaining force that holds one together under stress" (ibid., 82).

Similarly, the concept of commitment in hardiness suggests a strong will to remain engaged in overcoming challenges that is grounded in a deep and abiding capacity "to create one's own meaning and directions through exercise of choice" (Kobasa and Maddi 1984). According to Kobasa and Maddi, "the ability to perceive specific meanings in a world of events" is a major contributing force to the ability "to transcend any concrete situation



on the basis of that attributed meaning” (ibid., 247). It is this capacity upon which the concept of existential courage or hardiness is grounded. As with servant-leadership, this ability to make meaning and to, consequently, choose to embrace the future results in a sense of purposefulness.

Regardless of the reason(s) for the relationship, given the need for both servant-leadership and hardiness in our increasingly complex society, those who have developed both are more likely to prove successful. To the extent that they are related to one another, both servant-leadership and hardiness are likely to grow in importance as a construct of leadership development and practice.

#### LIMITATIONS

While the results of this study suggest the existence of a significant relationship between psychological hardiness and servant-leadership, it is important to note and review the limitations of this study.

First, given the nonrandom, intentional sampling, this study is not entirely generalizable to broader populations. This is particularly true given the focus on leaders in higher education within a population that is not as culturally diverse as many other, more cosmopolitan, contexts. Nonetheless, there is evidence to suggest that “social processes and patterns of causal relationships appear to be more generalizable,” even when using nonrandom sampling, “and more stable than specific characteristics such as an individual’s level of prejudice” (Babbie 2004, 225). Henry argued that nonprobability sampling is also a “practical choice” in exploratory research (Henry 1990, 23) of this kind. Nonetheless, future research should be conducted to validate the results of this study.

Second, this study focused primarily on examining correlational relationships. Consequently, directional, causal relationships cannot be inferred from this study. Future research will need to use path analysis, regression, and other methods to explore the dynamic interactions among these variables.

Third, the use of self-report instruments, particularly in relation to servant-leadership may have resulted in skewed data based on social desirability, in spite of the negative indicators (Power and Pride) included within the instrument. Further research in this area should be sure to use alternate means of measuring servant-leadership, including 360 degree evaluation and servant-leadership outcomes as well as self-report values and behaviors.



Instruments that control for social desirability, maturity, and self-awareness may also be valuable.

Fourth, the limited consistency in construct validation studies of the Page and Wong instrument does suggest some limitations with regard to the analysis in this study, particularly since the component scores were used. At the same time, the development of a composite scoring method and a means of distinguishing two types of leaders based on the results may prove useful in further servant-leadership studies.

#### CONCLUSION

In spite of these limitations, the ultimate contribution of this study to the literature on both servant-leadership and hardiness is significant. Those who study servant-leadership may benefit from an understanding of the significance that hardiness plays in relation to servant-leadership, and potentially, given future research, the connection to servant-leader outcomes. Likewise, hardiness researchers can benefit by connecting their studies to the field of servant-leadership as a means of moving forward the literature in this arena and identifying how these two related conceptual frameworks contribute to personal effectiveness amid stress. Consequently, the fruits of this effort to open up a new arena for exploration are significant and meaningful and merit attention.

#### APPENDIX A

##### *Definition of Servant-Leadership Used in Intentional Sampling:*

“A Servant-leader is one 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 and Wong, 2). 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 (ibid., 4). They do so through developing and empowering others, being vulnerable and humble, engaging in visionary leadership, intentionally serving all of the organization’s constituencies (servanthood), holding themselves and others accountable, maintaining their integrity (honesty and authenticity), and



leading courageously (Page and Wong 2003b). Such leaders are primarily concerned for the growth and development of those they serve through the achievement of solid organizational goals, as opposed to focusing on their own or “the organization’s” myopic interests at the expense of others (Greenleaf 1977).

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