IDENTIFYING AND INTEPRETING THE SERVANT LEADERSHIP DIMENSIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Leadership is not for self-glorification instead it is a position of servant-hood and indebtedness. Despite the large amount of focus, there is no widely agreed upon consensus on the operationalization of servant leadership. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to clarify the nature of servant leadership with a new perspective. This was done by interpreting the servant leadership themes using the lens of educational leadership and management (ELM). First, the author reviewed all the items in the enlisted instruments. This is done with the awareness that quality of the theory will only be aptly defined through the apprehension of servant leadership actions that respondents experienced. More important, since these items had been empirically tested hence it is theoretically fit to capture the essence of servant leadership. Second, the author clustered the related themes into several dimensions vis-à-vis ELM. Consequently, seven dimensions had been identified i.e. capacity building, stewardship, accountability, self-competence, compassion, altruism, and shares leadership. In sum, this study contributes to the development of servant leadership theory and practice, particularly in the field of educational leadership and management.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a position of servant-hood and true leadership emerges from a devotion to help others driven by indebtedness (DuBrin, 2016; Focht & Ponton, 2015). More important, it is ingrained with ethics in that the leader's every intrinsic values and explicit behaviors carries moral weight in many ways (Eubanks, Brown, & Ybema, 2012). This is especially the case for school as a service organization and helping-oriented institution (DiPaola & Neves, 2009). Since human relationship is the central tenet in the work of school leaders

thus school leadership is a moral activity in its own right (Greenfield, 2004). Moreover, "the education of the public children is by its very nature a moral activity" (Greenfield, 2004, p.174). Hence, servant leadership should be accentuated in schools (Bowman, 2005, 2014; Crippen, 2005).

Coined by Robert K. Greenleaf (1970), servant leadership is about the practices of emphasizing the welfare of others over the self-interest of the leader guided by a commitment to service (Andersen, 2009). The inclination to go beyond the self-interest of the leader as to optimize the benefit of the followers is the core characteristics of this leadership (Van Dierendonck, 2011). However, this does not mean that the leader is subservient to others but rather it is this motivation to "serve" that derives the awareness to "lead" later (Greenleaf, 1970; Van Dierendonck, 2011). Critically, the servant leader emphasizes on personal development and performance of the followers with the purpose to enable them to strive and flourish while assuming the role as moral leader who works to contribute to society welfare (Andersen, 2009; DuBrin, 2016; Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008).

Since school is not an ordinary organization but a complex yet dynamic learning organization (Riveros, Newton, & Burgess, 2012; Senge, 2006) as well as a loosely-coupled organization (Weick, 1976) in that teachers often work and interact with each other in group norms while maintaining their respective identity at the same time. understanding servant leadership in a unique working context like school-setting seems to be another worth pursuing endeavor, particularly as a multidimensional construct (Coetzer, Bussin, & Geldenhuys, 2017). Moreover, it has been found that servant leadership is less understood in school's social-activity context (Bowman, 2014; Cerit, 2009; Crippen, 2005, 2010; Drury, 2005).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Although servant leadership is more of a leadership philosophy than a leadership theory nonetheless it accentuates that leaders should always put others' needs, aspirations and interest above their own and they always view

themselves as "servants" whom are committed to the well-being of their followers rather than a leader that always command-and-control others (Liden et al., 2015; Van Dierendonck, 2011). This underlying "motivation to serve" distinguishes it from existing leadership theories that always focus on goal attainment of the organization (Sendjaya & James, 2002). Critically, it is this explicit accentuation along with the penchant to serve that derives desirable reciprocity from followers to contribute accordingly in realizing the organizational goals as posited by social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Dong Chul Shim, Hyun Hee Park, & Tae Ho Eom, 2016).

As known, Robert K. Greenleaf did not suggest the model or characteristics for servant leadership since its inception (Rachmawati & Lantu, 2014). Realizing the antecedents and consequences of servant leadership, Laub (1999) developed a six-clusters servant leadership characteristics measurement model in his Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA) model that encompasses valuing people, developing people, building community, displaying authenticity, providing leadership and sharing leadership, which set the benchmark for servant leadership scientific research thereafter (Van Dierendonck, 2011). Subsequently, several multi-dimensional measures emerged (Winston & Fields, 2015).

Among the multi-dimensional models includes the work of Dennis and Bocarnea (2005), Barbuto and Wheeler (2006), Hale and Fields (2007), Liden, Wayne, Zhao and Henderson (2008), and Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011). Sadly, none of these models is related to school context. Therefore, in order to fill this literature gap, the researcher employs systematic literature review method to identify the overall themes in servant leadership literature. Following this, a total of 34 themes were identified from most of the servant leadership multi-dimensional instruments. Next, these themes were interpreted with educational leadership-and-management (ELM) paradigm. Consequently, seven dimensions i.e. *capacity building, stewardship, accountability, self-competence, compassion, altruism* and *shares leadership* were identified, as shown in Table 1(Appendix 1).

OPERATIONALIZATION AND DISCUSSION

Capacity building

In servant leadership, the concept of "develop people" means providing opportunities to followers for learning and growth (Laub, 1999). Clearly, this corresponds directly to the concept of "helping subordinates grow and succeed" by Liden et al. (2008) in which the servant leader demonstrates genuine concern for followers' growth and development by providing support and mentoring. However, Dennis and Borcarnea (2005) used the term "empowerment" to define such practices. According to these researchers, servant leader not only help followers in learning ways to handle work professionally, the leader also empowers followers to make decisions (Dennis & Bocarnea, 2005).

On the same note, Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) also used the same terminology to address the similar propensities. They defined "empowerment" as a process of personal and professional development which includes mentoring, sharing of information, authorizing followers in problem solving and decision making process (Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Obviously, this is congruent to the concept of "empowering" by Liden at al. (2008) in that. servant leader empowers followers by entrusting followers with decision making responsibilities besides authorizing followers to solve problems during the tasks accomplishment process (Liden et al., 2008).

Taken together, the concepts delineated thus far corresponds to the idea of "capacity building" in which it is about improving one's ability to learn, perform core functions, solve problems, define and achieve objectives (Miller, Bennett, Carter, & Hylton-Fraser, 2015). Specifically, "develop people" in school setting is equivalent to capacity building because it relates to the enhancement of knowledge and skills (Leithwood, 2007).

In education, capacity building is associated with professional development (Akiba, 2015; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Netolicky, 2016). In terms of mentoring and empowerment in decision making, this is materialized through "personalize support" ingrained in the professional development process

whereby educational leader is expected to attend to teachers' work needs by mentoring or coaching and subsequently empowering them to make professional decisions (Fielding, 2006; Netolicky, 2016; Yukl & Becker, 2006). Besides, teachers also learn non-linearly as they are encouraged by the school leader to learn from competent teachers around them or even unpleasant working experiences in school for professional and personal growth (Garmston & Wellman, 2013; Rismark & Solvberg, 2011).

Meanwhile, the concern to address personal weakness or problems is exemplified through helping teacher to self-reflect their work practice, particularly teaching practices constantly (Scales, Kelly, & Senior, 2013). Lastly, the information sharing and learning culture are nurtured when the school leader facilitates the culture of "professional learning communities" among teachers which witnessed collaborative learning activities flourishes and sharing of knowledge along with quality teaching practices becomes the norm in the workplace (Admiraal & Lockhorst, 2012; Stoll, Bolam, Mcmahon, Wallace, & Thomas, 2006). Clearly, all the concerns in servant leadership literature had long been addressed in schools in the form of "capacity building".

Stewardship

As noted above, servant leader also engages in "community building" through establishing strong personal relationship with followers by working collaboratively and valuing the differences of the followers (Laub, 1999). This community building process is not only characterized by emphasizing teamwork and the establishing of community within the organization instead it is also with the aim to contribute to society at large (Laub, 1999). At some point, this corresponds to the concept of "organizational stewardship" by Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) which refers to "the extent that servant leader prepares an organization to make a positive contribution to society through community development" (p.319). More specifically, the servant leader believes that the organization is morally obliged to function as a community thus followers are encouraged to have a community spirit in the workplace (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006).

Apparently, the description above relates to "stewardship" by Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) directly in that it involves "a willingness to take responsibility for the larger institution and go for service instead of control and self-interest" (p.252). Meaning that, it is a sense of obligation to a common welfare, societal responsibilities and leadership guided by a long term vision (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). To a certain extent, this is related to "creating value for the community" by Liden et al. (2008) whereby the servant leader not only builds community through helping behavior but also encourages followers to engage accordingly out of moral awareness. Meanwhile, the servant leader also possesses "courage" to take risks in doing the right for the right reason without fearing of the consequences (Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Although the idea of "courage" is relatively idiosyncratic nonetheless it warrants attention to be associated with the aforementioned concepts in terms of "stewardship" (Hernandez, 2008).

Against this backdrop, the concept of "building community" bears striking relevance to school setting because school is not an ordinary community, instead it is a learning community (Sergiovanni, 2013). Coincidently, since servant leader works toward building a learning organization therefore it is the responsibility of the servant leader to build a sense of community among teachers and to ensure them feels accepted as a meaningful member of the greater group (Fitzgerald, 2015; Van Dierendonck, 2011). As noted, community is characterized by shared values and vision, collaborative decision making and action-taking hence building a community within an organization is able to create a cohesive network (Boone & Makhani, 2012). Implicitly, this directly relates to the practice of "teamwork" which had ingrained in school operation over the years because school is a team-based organization (Anit Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2007).

Considering these, it is clear that all the explications thus far denoted the act of "stewardship" based on two reasons. First, "stewardship" is closely related to social responsibility and teamwork (Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Next, stewardship also means acting with moral courage fearlessly in order to

safeguard the purpose of the organization (Hernandez, 2008). Again, since school is a social entity and obliged to contribute to society as a form of societal responsibilities hence this signifies that servant leader in school is accounted to act as "steward" in one way or another (Ramsey, 2006; Sergiovanni, 2013). Besides, given the fact that educators should demonstrate moral courage to challenge formidable realities when school's functions are compromised thus this reinforces further the notion that school leaders should assume the role as "steward" altogether (Sergiovanni, 2013).

Accountability

In order to be a "steward", it is essential to lead with authenticity (Walker, 2007). According to Laub (1999), "displaying authenticity" is being open and accountable to others by maintaining integrity, trust and openness. By definition, authenticity is the congruence of actions and thoughts by the leader regardless of situation (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Critically, it reflects the integrity of a leader as an authentic leader which is honest, open to criticism and always keeps his or her promise (Russell & Stone, 2002). Needless to say, this corresponds starkly to the concept of "authenticity" (Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011) literally and figuratively in that servant leader always behaves genuinely and receptive to own limitations and weaknesses.

By and large, these descriptions also related to "behaving ethically" by Liden et al. (2008) in that an ethical leader always interacts honestly and possesses high ethical standards. This is because by behaving ethically it typifies exemplifying integrity (Bolden, Gosling, Marturano, & Dennison, 2003). Meanwhile, congruent to the virtue of integrity is "trust" (Patterson, 2003). This is because, too often, followers' trust towards a leader is established on the integrity of the leader (Goh & Zhen-Jie, 2014; Patterson, 2003). Since "trust" is the outcome of followers' perception on the leader's integrity thus the concept of "trust" by Dennis and Bocarnea (2005) aptly captured the central ideas delineated thus far. Moreover, followers are more likely to trust and follow leaders whose behaviors are consistent (Dennis & Bocarnea, 2005). Besides, the openness of a leader to receive input from others increases a leader's trustworthiness (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). Nonetheless, from a broader

perspective, the conception of "accountability" (Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011) is more inclusive.

Although both researchers defined "accountability" to task performance, task responsibility and task outcome nonetheless is "accountability" in its own right (Hochwarter et al., 2007). In particular, "process accountability" and "outcome accountability" in which the former concerns "how things get done" while the latter is about result or output from the efforts ventured on tasks (Hall, Frink, & Buckley, 2015). Jointly, accountability is based around the need for organization to regulate the behaviors of the constituents in the organization in order to maintain social order in the organization through the element of trust (Ammeter, Douglas, Ferris, & Goka, 2004). Therefore, this also implies that accountability is associated with moral, ethics or integrity issues (Sahlberg, 2010).

Critically, accountability accentuates the congruence of "words" and "deeds" of the leader in order to build trust in interpersonal relationship (Ammeter, Douglas, Ferris, & Goka, 2004; Wood & Winston, 2005). Besides, an accountable leader often accepts leadership responsibilities willingly and responses receptively to criticisms whilst able to explicate beliefs, decisions, commitments or actions to constituents based on moral awareness (Wood & Winston, 2005). Succinctly, accountability is about "public disclosure of words and actions", "answerability for beliefs, decisions, commitments and actions" and "willing acceptance of responsibilities" (Wood & Winston, 2007). Therefore, servant leader is tantamount to accountable leader.

Self-competence

However, being accountable is not enough to account for a good leadership if the leader is visionless (Hassan, Mahsud, Yukl, & Prussia, 2013). In servant leadership, providing leadership" is about leading with a vision (Laub, 1999). To achieve the vision, the leader exhibits courage, healthy self-esteem and encourages risk-taking among followers (Laub, 1999). Along the way, the visionary leader is able to clarify goals and guide followers whilst utilizing the obstacles that ensue to harness the pursue (Laub, 1999).

Clearly, this fits perfectly to the concept of "vision" (Dennis & Bocarnea, 2005; Hale & Fields, 2007) in which the servant leader solicits followers' commitment, perception of organization's future direction and image, and subsequently incorporates followers' personal vision to establish a shared vision for the organization. On the same note, this is related to the concept of "persuasive mapping" by Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) whereby servant leader engages followers in conceptualizing a shared vision for the organization. In order to sustain commitment, the servant leader uses sound reasoning and pragmatic mental frameworks to persuade followers to accomplish tasks in realizing the vision (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006).

With this in mind, it indicates that the servant leader utilizes "wisdom" and "conceptual skills" in mobilizing followers to materialize the vision and mission of the organization (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Liden et al., 2008). For "wisdom", the servant leader is aware of the surroundings, adept at picking up environmental cues in the daily running of the organization and cognizant of the consequences to the decisions made whilst in terms of "conceptual skills", the servant leader is organizational-wise and task-wise in supporting and assisting followers (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006).

Put together, this points to the fact that the servant leader is deemed as a competent leader that is cognitively, socially yet emotionally intelligent (Coetzer et al., 2017). This is based on the fact that all outstanding leaders, including school leaders, are always cognitively, socially and emotionally competent besides adept in self-management, social-awareness, and relationship-management i.e. mentoring and motivating followers inspirationally (Boyatzis & Ratti, 2009). Moreover, the competence of leader depends largely on the effectiveness in implementing goals rather than by simply developing ideas i.e. vision and strategies i.e. mission for others to materialize them (Caldwell, Hasan, & Smith, 2015). After all, leadership is all about inspiring and influencing followers to achieve organization goals with strong sense of mission and confidence (Leithwood, 2003).

Compassion

As a type of ethics-people-oriented relational leadership, servant leader is compassionate towards followers through the displaying of unconditional love or "*agape* love" whilst creating culture that fosters high standards of ethics in the organization (Dennis & Bocarnea, 2005; Washington, Sutton, & Sauser, 2014). In this sense, the leader is committed in fostering spiritual recovery among followers, particularly from hardship and trauma (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Liden et al., 2008; Spears, 2010). Accordingly, the servant leader attends to the emotional issues and professional issues of the followers and helps them to resolve the emotional or psychological distress they suffered (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). This act of compassion is termed as "emotional healing" by both Barbuto et al. (2006) and Liden et al. (2008).

As Liden et al. (2008) put it, it is "the act of showing sensitivity to others' personal concerns" (p.162). Implicitly, this signifies that the servant leader is sensitive to the personal well-being of the followers, responsive towards followers' distress and reverent by followers to provide help in resolving personal problems (Liden et al., 2008). View differently, these acts of displaying sensitivity and assisting followers in solving personal and professional problems is a gesture of compassion (Rynes, Dutton, Bartunek, Dutton, & Margolis, 2012). Therefore, Coetzer et al. (2017) concurred that emotional healing is about compassion.

Nonetheless, this compassionate act is a form of "service" (Hale & Fields, 2007) to followers particularly the service to address the emotional needs of followers which most of the leaders are reluctant to commit (Daft, 2007). Meanwhile, this also implies that the servant leader practices "interpersonal acceptance" (Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011), empathy, and forgiveness. As compassion induces forgiving behavior and it is the extension of empathy thus it is apparent that the servant is a compassionate leader (Coetzer et al., 2017; Dutton, Workman, & Hardin, 2014). Put together, this corroborates the fact that servant leadership embraces compassion as a leadership virtue (Hackett & Wang, 2012)

The importance of compassion is widely recognized and it is particularly important in school setting because school is a place that fosters care, affection, kindness and tenderness in its own right (Eldor & Shoshani, 2016; Strauss et al., 2016). Therefore, a focus on compassion in school setting is significant as it reflects the heartwarming side of human experience within the contemporary individualistic society (Eldor & Shoshani, 2016), particularly for school organization as a "human enterprise" by nature (Dash & Dash, 2008; Peter, 2000).

Altruism

The compassionate act mentioned above also points to the fact that servant leader values people (Spears, 2010). According to Laub (1999), "valuing people" means listening receptively, believing in people and serving other's needs before self. In particular, the servant leader exhibits agreeableness, empathizes and appreciates followers, and focuses on the needs of the followers rather than self-interest (Laub, 1999). This signifies the practice of altruism because "altruism is the enduring tendency to think about the rights of other people, to feel concern and empathy for them, and to act in a way that benefits them" (Emmerik, Jawahar, & Stone, 2005, p.94). Therefore, "valuing people" is related to "altruistic calling" because this concept accentuates the idea that the leader puts others' interest above his or her self-interest and sometimes goes beyond the call of duty to meet their needs (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006).

Similarly, these two concepts correspond to "humility" in that the leader practices self-acceptance by focusing on followers' needs instead of own self-interest (Dennis & Bocarnea, 2005; Hale & Fields, 2007; Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Subsequently, this also signifies the presence of altruism because altruistic leader always optimizes others' interest rather than the leader's personal interest (Ballinger & Rockmann, 2010). Besides, practicing humility means not being self-focused but rather focused on others thus subsequently corroborates directly to the central idea of altruism (Dennis & Bocarnea, 2005; Van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015).

By implication, this means "putting subordinate first" in which the servant leader uses actions and words to showcase to followers that fulfilling their needs is a priority (Liden et al., 2008). At some point, this is about "standing back" in which the servant leader always prioritizes followers' interest, supports them and acknowledges their contribution selflessly (Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Simply, altruism is about others-oriented, selflessness, helping others to become better, and serving others' need as delineated by aforementioned concepts (Coetzer et al., 2017).

Shares leadership

In accordance to the people-centered approach mentioned above thus this also implies servant leader leads together i.e. shares leadership, with followers (Page & Wong, 2000). In this sense, "shares leadership" is characterized by the motivation to facilitate a shared vision, share power and status, relinquish control and promote followers (Laub, 1999). By sharing of power, the servant leader empowers followers in decision making ; by sharing of status, the servant leader is humble and does not utilize leadership position for self-aggrandizement (Laub, 2016; Laub, 1999). Additionally, the servant leader leads collaboratively with others using personal influence instead of positional authority and coercion in achieving the shared vision (Laub, 1999). This point is affirmed by servant leadership scholars over the years based on three reasons (Coetzer et al., 2017; Page & Wong, 2000; Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2016).

First, shared leadership is characterized by joint decision making and collective behavior (Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2016). Second, shared leadership foregrounds distributed influence and interdependence among members as a way of leading in achieving consensual vision (Carson, Tesluk, & Marrone, 2007). Third, as servant leader leads collaboratively by sharing power and status thus this inevitably facilitates the emergence of "informal leaders" who will lead along with the formal leader i.e. servant leader hence corresponds to meaning of "leadership sharing" itself (Pearce, 2004). Therefore, servant leadership is indeed a way of leading that promulgates power-sharing (Boone & Makhani, 2012; Spears, 2010).

In school setting, such leadership sharing practice is culminated in the form of teacher leadership (Kelley, 2011; Lieberman & Miller, 2004; Nappi, 2014; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). As a newer form of shared leadership (Murillo, 2013) and distributed leadership (Gronn, 2000; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004), teacher leadership is inevitably critical for school effectiveness thus formal school leaders are required to empower teachers to lead in order to improve students' learning quality as school is a complex loose-coupled learning organization that needs collective efforts from all school members to enhance its functions (Katyal & Evers, 2014; Lieberman & Miller, 2013). Besides, given the current challenging educational climate thus it is impossible for any school leader to lead alone (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2015; Mackenzie, 2013; Reeves, 2008). Therefore, the practice of leadership sharing accentuated in servant leadership indeed deemed to sync perfectly to the contemporary school climate to great extent.

CONCLUSION

Apparently, servant leadership promises of an effective educational leadership and management model (Cerit, 2009; Crippen, 2005). This serving-type of leadership is particularly relevant to educational context given its strong focus on human development i.e. intellectual-capital-building for students and professional-capital-building for teachers alike (Chen, Fan, & Tsai, 2013; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Patti, Senge, Madrazo, & Stern, 2015). Specifically, for school as a sacred place that nurtures human spirit and unleashes talents (Bowman, 2005, 2014). Moreover, its emphasis on egalitarian and collaborative working culture fits perfectly to school context that indeed accentuates collaboration and collegiality by nature (Admiraal & Lockhorst, 2012; Brouwer, Brekelmans, Nieuwenhuis, & Simons, 2012; Garmston & Wellman, 2013).

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Appendix 1

Table1. *The Clustering of Servant Leadership Themes to ELM Dimensions*

Laub (1999)	Dennis & Bocarnea (2005)	Barbuto & Wheeler (2006)	Hale & Fields (2007)	Liden, Wayne, Zhao & Henderson (2008)	Van Dierendonck & Nuijten (2011)	*ELM Dimensions*
• Develop people	• Empowerment			• Empowering • Helping subordinates grow and succeed	• Empowerment	*Capacity building*
• Builds community		• Organizational stewardship		• Creating value for the community	• Stewardship • Courage	*Stewardship*
• Displays authenticity	• Trust			• Behaving ethically	• Authenticity • Accountability	*Accountability*
• Providing leadership	• Vision	• Persuasive mapping • Wisdom	• Vision	• Conceptual skills		*Self-competence*
	• *Agape* love	• Emotional healing	• Service	• Emotional healing	• Forgiveness	*Compassion*
• Values people	• Humility	• Altruistic calling	• Humility	• Putting subordinates first	• Humility • Standing back	*Altruism*
• Shares leadership						*Shares leadership*