Measuring the Readiness of Administrative Leaders to Adopt the Servant Leadership Philosophy: Exploratory Study in Karbala University

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Abstract

The current study aims to discover the willingness of the leaderships in Karbala University to work by the servant leadership philosophy through the (226) employee points of view survey. Through a questionnaire (Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011), it reached a group of conclusions; one of it was that there is a weakness in the readiness of Administrative Leaders to adopt servant leadership philosophy. The originality of this research is that the findings will help leaders in Karbala University to understand that they need to enhance their readiness to adopt servant leadership so that they can help their followers do their job effectively and efficiently.

Keywords: servant leadership, Karbala University

1. Introduction

The cornerstone of servant leadership can be traced back to Greenleaf (1970). Greenleaf defined Servant leaders as leaders who want to serve followers and take this as the most important responsibility so that he can achieve the organizational goals (Spears, 2004). The most important characteristics of the servant leadership are both denials of the self and opportunity creation inside the organization to help followers develop themselves; whereas the final aim of servant leadership is the luxury of achieving and taking care about the organization with his employees (Dierendonck, 2011). This positive attitude toward employees will avail strong, safe relations inside, create a hopeful atmosphere among employees to introduce better performance with easy achievement and enhance confidence. In many instances, success or failure of the organization in their own environment is related to the leadership nature. Writers searched the concept of "Leadership," trying to discover its ambiguity and how to invest to be an active tool serving the organization's success. For that reason, many studies concluded that many leadership approaches could realize success while most of them suggested that the leader represents the key element except a new comparative leadership approach called servant leadership. Servant leadership indicates that the real leader is the one who serves first.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Carroll and Patterson (2014), Dennis and Bocarnea (2005), and Patterson (2003) think that servant leadership introduces a unique perspective about leadership ethics because it focuses on the leader as a servant. This concept exceeds, focusing on organization but turns toward followers needs. It indicated that servant leadership contains seven unique elements, which are love, modesty, preference, vision, confidence, empowerment, and service. Pannhauser and Boshoff (2007) added that servant leadership is when a leader is prepared to be serviceable first, taking followers profits and needs to account and develop them to be leaders in the future. Dierendonck and Patterson (2010) pointed out that the model of servant leadership proceeds toward internationality and redefines leadership whereas it implies the focus on the building of society and represents a source of immortal serving ideology and it is as old as time itself. Anderson (2005) signed that servant leadership is the desire to serve others as giving them their priority and paramount needs, while it is characterized by the trust between the leader and followers to face risks shoulder to shoulder as seeking for perpetuating the organization. The other feature of the servant leader is prediction and sensing indiscernible. Also, he has persuasion and voluntary acceptance in case of change without coercion. Anzalone (2007), Spears (2010), and

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Carter (2012), and Spears (2002) added several measures of servant leadership, which are listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, vision, prediction, commitment to developing collectively and build society. They also added that servant leadership contains influencing others for participating in others' hearts, brains, souls, invention, and distinction and stimulate followers to invent to introduce their best.

Servant leadership contains two features, which are functional features and division features (Krekeler, 2010) and (Russell and Stone, 2002) the first one is to be distinguished through logic kind and leader's characters and features that take into account through some distinction behaviors in the workplace. Job futures are active with the servant leadership; it contains vision, honor, integrity, honesty, service, insistence, leadership empowerment, and respectable. While the division feature is completing and increasing functional features, they contain communication, credibility, efficiency, supervisory, clarity, effect, persuasion, listening, and encouragement. Rimes (2011) pointed out that the servant leaders are the superiors because they can listen, view, and know, as they have a unique axiom vision. Servant leadership has many positive characters of which:

- 1) They have a situation and self-denial.
- 2) Servant leadership focuses on developing and maintaining employees.
- 3) Leaders are responsible for creating a safe, positive work environment, encouraging invention and empowering self-motivation.
- 4) Leaders characterized by humanity when they treat followers as human beings in the workplace.
- 5) Servant leadership acquires confidence when leaders put the legitimate needs of the employees before their self-interest.
- 6) Leaders earn respect when their workers' benefit above the bottom line.
- 7) Leaders understand their employees.
- 8) Leaders develop and maintain good relation through sympathy, kindness, healing, and emotional smartness.
- 9) Leaders earn support and cooperation through evaluating and building the work team and others' participation in making decisions.
- 10) Leaders are seeking to achieve the regulated aims by developing and releasing the creative energies of the human resources.

Whitmore (2004) and Spears (2005) pointed out that the servant leaders do not need to be trained because they are competent persons. They can produce further a vision because Servant leadership requires encouragement and opportunity to be grown. Amadeo (2008) indicated that Servant leadership represents a pattern to create ethical and regulated style. The foundations of servant leadership are originality, mutual trust, and empowerment. Amadeo also added that Servant Leadership contains six aspects which are: people value, development of people, participation in leadership, the finding of leadership, the building of society, and production of originality. Page and Wong (2000) pointed out that servant leader is the person who invests himself/herself in various places, enabling him to work hard, since the core of Servant leadership is serving others for the sake of gaining the public advantages, regardless of self-interest. It should not view the servant leadership as a weak leadership or be lost, and further; the leader's decisions do not distinguish servant leadership from other leadership styles, but how they practice their responsibilities through consultation for these decisions. Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) indicated that Servant leaders do not use their force to achieve aims but persuade employees to a fulfillment their duties. Sousa and Dierendonck (2015) pointed out that Servant Leadership has three aspects that are accountability, empowerment, and supervision. Supervision is the aspect that is approaching from the vision concept or long-term orientation, which is necessary to the Servant leadership.

Ling et al. (2016) indicated that Servant leadership works to make harmonious relations between a leader and followers, and motivating them to learn. It is based on reciprocity, which produces mutual commitment and leads to positive business behaviors. Jr and Wheeler (2006) added that Servant leadership is characterized by humility, associative, self-independence, and moral development of followers. Mahembe & Engel, 2013 indicated that Servant leadership interacts with the Authentic leadership in two features that are humility and originality, so it is related to the original leadership. Reed (2015) added that servant leadership is a form of ethical leadership. He indicated that there are several similarities between Servant leadership and transformative leadership, spiritual leadership, and original leadership at recent days. He determined some determinants in which: support of individuals, the building of community, altruism, equality, and ethical integrity. Van Kuik (1998) added that Servant leadership is the regular human's feeling to be obliging, combining a common goal with his followers. They are loyal to his employees and interact more with the community without pushing other toward self-interest.

Li (2014) added that Servant leadership has an essential effect on the organizational performance. It helps the organization to win as a dominant of the market, improves organizational performance, thus, it can compete. Servant leadership behaviors can compete and affect the root of the organization.

Austin and Honeycutt (2011) pointed out that one of the issues faced leaders of the organizations at these days is how to make the staff participate and involve an extra effort to achieve the organizational goals; for that reason, the philosophy of the Servant leadership avails a different way to stand the responsibilities of the Servant leadership. Liden et al. (2008) indicated the employees' ability to achieve their potential. This creates a self-motivated formation, for that reason when leaders feed self-motivated activities and involve employees within the local community, they become more committed to the organizational principles and more willing to maintain high levels of performance. Echols (2009) believes that one of the necessary theories of Servant leadership is to be a correlation between people and society, organization, and the success of each other depends on the other. Ding et al. (2012) indicated that Servant leadership represented respecting employees, care of employees, helping subordinators to grow and success, the desire to apply cushy and sympathy concept, to be ready for sacrificing, to be neutral and integrated, possessing the pioneering spirit, providing guidance to employees and responsibility toward society. Barnabas and Clifford (2012) and Sendjaya et al. (2008) added that you have to gain experience in service before being a servant. Researchers restricted six main patterns. Each one branched several sub-braches to be driven from Gandhi that is as follows:

- 1) Voluntary relinquishment (readiness to be a servant, service actions achieving).
- 2) Self-originality (humility, integrity, accountability, safety, and the ability to influence).
- 3) Public Relations (cooperation, equality, availability, and acceptance).
- 4) Change of effect (confidence, guidance, modeling, vision, and empowerment).
- 5) Highness of the soul (devoutness, interdependence, the feeling of mission, and perfection).
- 6) Ethical responsibility (actions and ethical thinking).

Top et al. (2015) referred to that Servant leadership acquires broad audience formation's organizations. The interest in Servant Leadership feeds from the changes that occur in a workplace and community. It encourages power-sharing for the sake of public interests, focusing on community and teamwork and contributing to making decisions for others. Krkutiu and Chafram (2015) believe that the Servant leader avails opportunity to empower the skills of employees, keeping his promise to prove partisans' adherence to great ethical values and encourages worker to engage outside a workplace in available opportunities of the community's service. Andre and Lantu (2015) referred to the similarity between Servant Leadership and human capital since both of them are developing employees so that organizations acting will improve subjectively, while Servant leadership creates a relationship with partisans. For this reason, employees eventually will feel more comfortable in addition to having a sense of control. Greasley and Bocarnea (2014) said that force had driven from situation and others leaderships' empowerment as a mean to create leaders all over the organization. He adopted (Patterson, 2003), whereas Servant leadership appears intimate. Leaders through Servant leadership feels humility and altruism, whereas both are leading to confidence and vision that leading for leader's empowerment achieving to serve.

Rachmawati and Lantu (2014) said that Servant leaders use persuasion toward his/her partisans, rather than using authority in both force order and legal system. They also pointed out that Servant leaders had the influence to a unique spiritual culture creation and focused on stability and development of the organization. They indicated that the most important matter in decision making is acceptance by followers through both fully maturity and the precocity of followers. Varra et al. (2012) believed that Servant leaders can achieve a comparatively sustainable ability through the philosophy of Servant Leadership, which is more than procedure works to guide and lead the common culture for all employees. Spears (2002) said that it is necessary to be sure that Servant Leadership neither an approach nor a matter can be rooted quickly inside the organization because that the core of Servant leadership required a long time to be steadfast, since it is the path of changing life and working through the essence. He added that Servant Leadership is a way of any creator who can create positive change all over our society. Trompehaare and Voerman (2010) added that Servant leadership is representing in giving an enough area for people to develop themselves and gaining them the responsibility to be able to achieve their private ability. Cochrum (2012) said that Servant leadership came to limit the leaders' ego through power sharing and developing all dynamic relations to help in the improvement and growth of followers. Li and Han (2013) added that Servant leadership is the deciding factor of regulated and economic systems' success because Servant leader is the person who can create a vision of the organization, express the foresight of his followers, and build a common vision. Lowder (2007) indicated that Servant Leadership is accepting the idea of participation

responsibility of organizational culture, creating a whole better situation, taking non-conflicted decisions with the followers' attitudes and participating in creating an organizational culture that adds value to members.

Chi and Smith (2006) referred to that unless there is no Servant leader or humility. If there is no humility, there is no service. He defined Servant leader as a person who leads another service above self-interest to achieve public interest of team, organization, and society. Anzalone (2007) pointed out that Greenleaf predicted the leadership's recession at the end of the twentieth century. The sixtieths and the seventieths were a period of turmoil and the questioning of leadership, resulting in the adoption of new critical view in both authority and governance issues, an appearance of making support to the Servant leader as a replacement for using force in the management positions that leads influence ethically through giving them voluntary loyalty. Freese (2004) said that the best and the convoluted experience of the leader is his own striving to develop others. He added that the person who serves is being more healthy, wise, free, and independent. Zentner (2015) said that there are religious values that prevail in the main religions of the world, whereas there are common denominators which are honesty, respect, kindness, the obedience of laws, and service-oriented decision. When comparing Servant leadership with the religious aspects, a man may suppose that there are universal values in line with Servant leaderships' behaviors.

Lowder (2009) indicated that Servant leadership leads to create spiritual education. This will activate in the organization within environmental differences; for that reason, Servant leadership will be the Servant leader's major motive, in addition, to focusing on growth, individual's enhancement, and personal development of his followers. Kantharia (2012) indicated that Servant leadership as a process from the social, organizational or group's effect point of view, whereas an individual mobilizes and supplies with job aids from others within the group at the beginning and accomplishing sharing missions. They wishes for follow up and provides the dangers of failure as success opportunities. Hanif et al. (2013) believe that modernistic subordinates based on knowledge have the best ability to affect the Servant ability. For this reason, Servant leadership can foresee the effect of subordinates and its empowerment by servant leaders who create justice between leaders and subordinators. Kashyap and Rangnekar (2004) believe that Servant leadership has the fundamental role in the employees' stability, the reduction of job turnover, and the employees' contentment enhancement. Dierendonck (2011) said that Servant Leadership combines the desire to serve, which lead to leadership stimulation, or it may be to the country of that, but moves from the stimulation to lead into service combination. Searle and Barbuto (2011) added that one of the requisite concepts of Servant Leadership is the facility of positive change and the ability of a leader to empower spiritual recovery from hardship and trauma. Beck (2014) added that Servant leadership confirms the regulation and application of pragmatism knowledge used in achieving a balance between self-interest and public interest within the environmental context to public interest. He also added that Servant leadership is acquiring evidence from its environment to prove its own decisions and point of view.

Barbuto et al. (2014) said that drawing of mental models involves the leader's unique ability to understand and use these models. These models are used by his subordinators and are converted to directly affect them. He also said that the emotional intelligence is a prerequisite to draw the mental models of servant leadership. Hale et al. (2007) believe that scientists describe Servant leadership as a behavior and characteristic possessed by the leader. Sendjaya and Sarros (2002) referred to one of the reasons at the scarcity of the Studies in the Servant Leadership is the contrast of the language, whereas it may be hard to think and act as a leader and employee at the same time. According to the servant leadership theory, leaders serve, and lead. However, this relation attracted the dynamic conceptual; that is, the complementary roles of slavery, leadership, and scientists' interest. Joseph and Winston (2005) said that when the leader is spiritual, he will desire to serve, so that he will be a servant leader. He also indicated that building of confidence is not limited to the leader and subordinator but also among subordinators themselves.

- **A) HP1:** The Administrative leaders working at the University of Karbala are ready to adopt the servant leadership philosophy from the female employees' point of view.
- **B) HP2:** The Administrative leaders working at the University of Karbala are ready to adopt the servant leadership philosophy from the male employees' point of view.
- **C) HP3:** There is a difference between the average male and female employees responses about the readiness of the administrative leaders to adopt the servant leadership philosophy.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Sampling and Data Collection

Researchers started the search since March 2016, whereas many specialized scientific sources have been seen. After that, the decision of adopting (Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011) questionnaire form was distributed, because it is the nearest to the environment of the suggested research. They contain eight items: Empowerment, which

contains seven questions. Stand back, which contain three questions. Accountability, which three questions. Forgiveness, which three questions. Courage, which two questions. Authenticity, which contains four questions. Humility, which five questions, and Stewardship, which contains three questions. For carrying out the research, 120 female employees and 140 male employees of Karbala University had been selected to answer the questionnaire, which includes eight main criteria to measure Servant leadership that are (Empowerment, Stand back, Accountability, Forgiveness, Courage, Authenticity, Humility, and Stewardship). The female employees who responded were 107, that means 89%. The male employees who were 119 that means 85%. Researcher's test the reliability of the questionnaire for both female employer's and male responses using Cronbach's alpha, the results was (0.70, 0.78), respectively, the values are statically acceptance.

3.2 Measurement

For testing the first hypothesis, researchers used a t-test for one sample by utilizing the statistical program SPSS V23, and the results were as in the table below.

Testing first hypothesis:

Results in Table 1 show that there are significant correlation relationships among dimensions of Servant leadership S.L. from the perspective of the female employees. Administrative leaders at the University of Karbala suffer from weakness in some of servant leadership (empowerment Emp., stand back St., and stewardship Stew.) as (t) significant was 0.48, 0.41, or 0.29, respectively. In turn, administrative leaderships adopting dimensions (accountability Act., forgiveness For., courage Cou., authenticity Auth., and humility Hum.) from the female employer's point of view as (t) significant was 0.00. Overall, results showed that the servant leadership from the standpoint of female employees is not adopted, because the mean of the servant leadership was 3.9, and the t value was -1.42 It's significant was 0.16, which is larger than the significance level (0.05). These results inferred researchers to reject the first hypothesis.

Table 1. Table Correlation relationships of the female employees

	Emp.	St.	Act.	For.	Cou.	Auth.	Hum.	Stew.	S.L.
Emp.	1								
St.	0.598**	1							
Act.	0.308**	0.244**	1						
For.	-0.25**	-0.240**	0.248**	1					
Cou.	0.087	0.288**	0.121	-0.089	1				
Auth.	0.359**	0.396**	0.267**	-0.058	0.214*	1			
Hum.	0.690**	0.661**	0.372**	-0.299**	0.131	0.491**	1		
Stew.	0.548**	0.531**	0.376**	-0.102	0.098	0.348**	0.654**	1	
S.L.	0.70**	0.738**	0.647**	0.084	0.405**	0.606**	0.767**	0.731**	1
Mean	3.92	3.89	4.38	4.53	3.36	3.65	3.45	3.87	3.87
S. D	1.15	1.28	1.54	1.70	1.25	0.91	1.05	1.17	1.66
T	-0.70	-0.82	4.49	4.20	-5.24	-3.94	-5.31	-1.06	-1.42
Sig.	0.48	0.41	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.29	0.16

df = 106, p.v = 0-05

Testing second hypothesis:

Results in table 2. show that there are significant correlation relationships among dimensions of Servant leadership from the perspective of the male employees. Administrative leaders at the University of Karbala suffer from weakness in some dimensions of servant leadership (empowerment, stand back, and stewardship) as (t) significant was 0.11, 0.15, or 0.25 respectively. In turn, administrative leaders adopting dimensions (accountability, forgiveness, courage, authenticity, and humility) from the male employers point of view, its significant of t was 0.00, respectively .Overall, results showed that the servant leadership from the male employees point of view is not adopted, because the mean of the servant leadership was 4.08, t value was 1.11 and its significant was 0.27, which is greater than the significance level (0.05).These results inferred researchers to reject the first hypothesis.

Table 2. Table Correlation relationships of the male employees

	Emp.	St.	Act.	For.	Cou.	Auth.	Hum.	Stew.	S.L.
Emp.	1								
St.	0.641**	1							
Act.	0.303**	0.348**	1						
For.	-0.016	-0.056**	0.266**	1					
Cou.	0.345**	0.256**	0.217*	-0.272*	1				
Auth.	0.289**	0.488**	0.301**	0.108	0.480**	1			
Hum.	0.640**	0.419**	0.133	-0.10	0.307**	0.448**	1		
Stew.	0.558**	0.458**	0.236**	0.028	0.258**	0.357**	0.632**	1	
S.L.	0.720**	0.717**	0.565**	0.328**	0.631**	0.689**	0.664**	0.68**	1
Mean	4.19	4.29	4.66	4.65	4.61	3.75	3.63	3.99	4.08
S. D	1.81	1.66	1.68	1.76	1.71	1.72	1.77	1.74	1.78
t	1.6	1.45	5.56	5.86	-2.98	-2.28	-2.98	-1.15	1.11
Sig.	0.11	0.15	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.02	0.00	0.25	0.27

d.f=118, p.v=0.05

Third hypothesis Test:

Researchers used independent samples t-tests with results as show in the following table.

Table 3. Table Independent Samples T-Test

	Equal	ene's Test for quality of Variances		df	Sig.	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Servant leadership	F	Sig.			(2-tailed)	Difference	Difference	Lower	Upper
	3.846	0.051	1.756 1.773	224 223.025	0.080 0.078	0.1770 0.1770	0.10080 0.0998	-0.0215 -0.1978	0.3757 0.3738

The preceding table shows that the two communities are approximately equal variances because the Levene Test is significant at 0.051, which is greater than the test level (0.05). So, the value of t=1.756 is at 0.080 with 224 freedom degree. This indicates the rejection of the third hypothesis.

To leave responders free, put forward their ideas. In an attempt to see if the perceptions and visions of workers in the Iraqi environment about the qualities of the Servant leader differ from those and that studied all over the world. The researchers enclosed a specific question within the investigation sheet asking the responded individual to include the most characteristics of the servant leader that they think its importance. The results are declared in the following Table 4.

Table 4. Table Results

Freq.	Property	Frequency	Ratio
1	Accuracy	12	0.053097
2	Courage	30	0.132743
3	integrity	22	0.097345
4	Attention	14	0.061947
5	Equitability	26	0.115044
6	Continuation	6	0.0265459
7	Offer of Assistance	32	0.141593
8	Humility	24	0.106195
9	Respect and Communion	14	0.016947
10	Forgiveness	16	0.070796
11	Accountability	2	0.00885
12	Experience	28	0.123894
	Total	226	100

The above table shows that 14% individuals from the study think that it is necessary for servant leader to be a distinction in the assistance of others. Around 13% said that it is necessary for servant leader to be courageous and able to face difficulties. Approximately 11% think that it is necessary for servant leaders to be courageous, while the less aspect from the individuals' study point of view is accountability, which is %0.88. This is because the current leaders characterized by accountability so that this aspect did not form an urgent requirement for them. The following was in continuation with 2.8%.

4. Conclusions

The research aimed to test the readiness of the leaderships in Karbala University to work with the Servant Leadership Strategy from the employees' point of view. The researchers reached the followings conclusions:

- 1) The male and female employees agreed that the administrative leaders have no readiness to work with the Servant Leadership Strategy.
- 2) The male and female employees almost agree about the range of adopting leadership variables.
- a) Leaders adopting Accountability, Forgiveness, Courage, Authenticity, and Humility
- b) Administrative leaders not adopting Empowerment, Stand back, and Stewardship.
- 3) Researchers deduced that the individuals of the study realize that whenever their duty's empowerment is increasing from their point of view, their mistakes forgiveness will be decreasing by the leaderships.
- 4) The two researchers noticed that female employees realized that there is a negative relation between forgiveness and stand back, courage, authenticity, humility, and stewardship.
- 5) The two researchers noticed that male employees realized that there is a negative relation between forgiveness and humility.
- 6) The employees of Karbala University lack for administrative leadership give them real assistant, to defend their ideas and opinions courageously in front of higher authorities and have favoritism and lack of justice.

5. Recommendations

The two researchers suggest the followings to help the University of Karbala and other institutions to move in the right direction:

- 1) Act to empower both genders of employees to do their duties from the way they see is suitable for identifying general, flexible framework not useful detail.
- 2) Higher authorities (The Ministry of Higher Education And Scientific Researches or The University of Karbala) should avail the necessary knowledge to support the employees business and encourage them to be accountable.
- 3) Administrative leaderships in the University of Karbala must have a vision for the future of the university, as they must transfer this vision to the employees' minds to get them to associate with the objective.
- 4) Leaders should learn from past mistakes. It is better to declare subordinators about dangers and in a certain way because one of his missions is to empower the confidence of subordinators by the leader.
- 5) The empowerment of the business of employees in the way they do not mean the leader abandonment. Leaders should take that into consideration so he should interfere whenever bad situation may occur. He should also remember that the big success is his ability makes employees achieve their aims by which result are the target of the university.
- 6) If the leader is courageous, he can change a group of scared employees into an active group, so leaders of a group should be courageous. Through his self-confidence, defense, and decisions, he can transfer his confidence to the employees by making these aims the personal of the employee. Leaders should also act to accept counted risk and not depend on their officer's support.
- 7) If the leader is fair, peace and calm are observed in situation among employees. Their own effort will not steal or transform to other will emerge. Also they will realize that they get punishment or reward according to their own actions. Justice is a public demand by employees. It would motivate most of the employees to act better to achieve greater achievement to gain leadership and organize content.
- 8) Humility is a good human attribute that enables leaders to make subordinators more able to understand what he wants from them, and accepts and applies his ideas leniently. Administrative leaderships should enhance this aspect because this analysis results in the last question that humility is an important and necessary quality employees look forward to in their leader.

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