

SERVANT LEADERSHIP AMONG GOVERNMENT SUPERVISORS

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Abstract— Leadership plays a critical role in shaping organizational performance, particularly in the public sector, where ethical and effective leadership are essential. This study examines the practice of servant leadership among government supervisors in the Cagayan Valley Region, focusing on five dimensions: altruistic calling, emotional healing, wisdom, persuasive mapping, and organizational stewardship. Using a descriptive-survey research design, data were collected from 110 government employees through a standardized servant leadership questionnaire. The findings indicate that government supervisors exhibit servant leadership to a great extent across all dimensions, with the highest ratings in wisdom and altruistic calling. Statistical analysis revealed no significant differences in servant leadership based on supervisors' age, educational attainment, or years of service. However, a significant difference was found in persuasive mapping between male and female supervisors, with male supervisors demonstrating stronger persuasion and influence. The study underscores the importance of servant leadership in fostering employee engagement, job satisfaction, and commitment to public service. These results suggest that government agencies should strengthen servant leadership training programs to reinforce ethical leadership and public service commitment. Future research may explore servant leadership's impact on employee performance and organizational effectiveness in broader government settings.

Keywords: servant leadership, government supervisors, public sector leadership, altruistic calling, emotional healing, wisdom, persuasive mapping, organizational stewardship, ethical leadership

I. INTRODUCTION

Leadership is the most influential factor in the performance of any organization, whether it is in the private or public sector. It is a process by which one person influences the thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors of others (Mills, 2005), and the styles that leaders use will be based on a combination of their beliefs, values, and preferences. Organizations benefit from an understanding of how leadership engages followers in day-to-day activities because the outcomes of this act contribute to the organization's ability to be effective. In any organization, leadership influences workplace outcomes such as employee engagement, commitment, and satisfaction. This is true for public sectors such as government agencies. Moreover, the performance of a government unit is ultimately affected by the practice of a particular leadership style. One of the greatest challenges facing government leaders in the Philippines is the urgent need to practice honesty, integrity, and commitment to the common good. Public service is a vocation to serve the common good of all, and the Philippines needs real public servants.

The world is crying out for ethical and effective leadership that serves others, invests in their development, and fulfills a shared vision. Among the many leadership styles (i.e., authoritarian, benevolent dictatorship, participatory, etc.), the one that best represents the ideals embodied in the human factor is servant-leadership (Shekari & Nikooparvar, 2012). Servant leadership is a timeless concept extensively studied in the West across different sectors. It is centered on the core values of "Caring" and "Serving others" and focuses on the values of trust, appreciation of others, and empowerment (Hoveida et al., 2011). Further, servant leadership goes beyond putting others first. It is about supporting and growing individuals to allow them to do their best work. A servant leader's behavior can be seen as a major source of influence for bringing about change and development in followers. Thus, the commitment of government employees to work and to their leaders can be greatly influenced by the servant leadership behaviors of supervisors. Since servant leadership cares for the well-being of the followers, it can influence the general feeling about the job done and, thus, the job satisfaction of employees. Moreover, servant leadership enhances work engagement in different workplaces, and employees who engage to a great extent in their work tend to feel positive and satisfied with their job performance. Servant leadership is a management paradigm, which is emerging throughout literature and in application in various organizations worldwide. Proponents of the servant leadership model state that it has universal applicability across cultures, religions, and organizational models. The servant leadership model fills the void of morality that some suggest exists in other leadership paradigms. The servant leadership concept, while not explicitly stated, is derived from a Judeo-Christian foundation (Kezar, 2001; McCuddy & Cavin, 2008; Sen Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002), the concept rooted in Jesus Christ's teachings to his disciples that, in order to be a leader, one must be a servant. Building on this foundation, proponents of servant leadership assert that leaders motivated by an intrinsic desire to serve have a positive effect on their followers, as well as on organizational health and success (Sen Sendjaya, Sarros, & Santora, 2008). As the concept of servant leadership is acquiring greater significance in academia and other sectors in Western countries, it has a relative shortage of empirical studies in Asia, especially in the Philippine context. This empirical study focused on the extent to which servant leadership is practiced.

Furthermore, with the kind of politics and government that the Philippines is currently experiencing, many studies have revealed that the type of government in the Philippines is not ideal, and servant leadership is not genuinely observed. However, studies conducted on servant leadership have only been conducted among elected officials and not primarily among government agencies (Weymes, 2003; Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Yukl, 2006). Hence, this study was conducted.

II. METHODS

This study utilized a quantitative type of research employing a descriptive survey. The respondents of the study were 110 employees from different government agencies in the Cagayan Valley Region.

The study utilized a standard questionnaire developed by Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) to assess servant leadership among government supervisors. The tool consists of 23 items divided into five categories, which include altruistic calling (4 items), emotional healing (4 items), wisdom (5 items), persuasive mapping (5 items), and organizational stewardship (5 items). The respondents assessed the servant leadership of their supervisors following the scale:

Scale	Qualitative Interpretation
4	strongly agree
3	somewhat agree
2	somewhat disagree
1	strongly disagree

Data Analysis

Frequency and Percentage were utilized to describe the profile of the respondents.

Mean was used to describe the servant leadership of government employees following the said scales:

Scale	Qualitative Description
3.50 – 5.00	Manifested to a Very Great Extent
2.50 – 3.49	Manifested to a Great Extent
1.50 – 2.49	Manifested to a Little Extent
1.00 – 1.49	Not at all

Independent Sample T-Test and One Way Analysis of Variance were used to determine if there is a significant difference on the concept of servant leadership among government employees when grouped according profile variables.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	6	54.55
Female	5	45.45
Age		
21 – 30 years old	2	18.18
31 – 40 years old	4	36.36
41 – 50 years old	4	36.36
51 years old and above	1	9.10
Educational Attainment		
With Master’s Degree	7	63.64
With Doctorate Degree	2	18.18
With Post-Baccalaureate Degree	2	18.18
Number of Years as Supervisors		
Less than 5 years	3	27.27
6 – 10 years	1	9.10
11 – 15 years	2	18.18
16 – 20 years	1	9.10

21 – 25 years	2	18.18
26 years and above	2	18.18

Table 1 presents the profile of government supervisors from government agencies in the Cagayan Valley Region. It can be seen from the table that there are more male supervisors than female supervisors in the present study. Furthermore, the majority of the supervisors are between 31 and 50 years old. In terms of their educational attainment, all of the supervisors have post-graduate degrees, with the majority of them having completed their Master’s degree. Finally, all supervisors vary with regard to their length of service as supervisors in their respective agencies.

Table 2. Servant Leadership among Government Supervisors

Dimensions	Mean	Qualitative Description
Altruistic calling	3.22	Manifested to a Great Extent
Emotional healing	2.85	Manifested to a Great Extent
Wisdom	3.35	Manifested to a Great Extent
Persuasive mapping	3.20	Manifested to a Great Extent
Organizational Stewardship	3.15	Manifested to a Great Extent
Overall Mean	3.15	Manifested to a Great Extent

Table 2 shows the extent of manifestations of government supervisors on servant leadership as assessed by their subordinates. Employees assessed that their supervisors manifest to a great extent the value of altruistic calling. Altruistic leadership also helps leaders build trust among the team, and it helps their subordinates align their personal goals with corporate goals. It may encourage altruistic behaviors among employees and foster a reciprocal culture within the organization. This means that employees believed that their supervisors put their best interests ahead of their own and will do everything to serve their employees. Furthermore, their supervisors will sacrifice their own interests to meet the needs of their subordinates. Previous studies stressed the need for government supervisors to imbibe altruistic leadership, especially since they play a critical role in the delivery of government services to the people (Avolio & Bass, 2009).

Meanwhile, government employees also observed that their supervisors manifest the value of emotional healing to a great extent. This means that government supervisors possess the skill of helping their subordinates with emotional issues. Other scholars have argued that the ability to provide emotional healing to employees is not only a powerful skill for leaders to maintain but also provides emotional stability and support for the entire organization (Dacher, 1999; Weymes, 2003). Furthermore, the results also revealed that effective leadership requires the value of emotional leadership among supervisors since, in an organization, all aspects converge, such as cognitive, social, spiritual, and emotional aspects. Furthermore, they care for their suffering employees and try to calm and comfort them when they are distressed or anguished. Kouzes and Posner (2000) suggested that leaders who care and encourage the hearts of people working with them create a feeling of well-being in them.

In addition, employees also observed that their supervisors manifest the value of wisdom to a great extent. This means that government supervisors are alert and aware of what is happening within their organization. More importantly, they are good at anticipating the consequences of decisions. Bierly et al. (2000) argued that servant leaders are able to monitor their surroundings, understand the implications of events, and anticipate the consequences of actions. This ability to invoke wisdom in a variety of settings allows servant leaders to make both altruistic choices and the best possible decisions at any given time. The results also imply a very important role of leaders, which is awareness and decision-making.

Furthermore, in terms of persuasive mapping, government supervisors also manifest this value to a great extent. This means that supervisors possess the skill of persuasion and are gifted with the ability to convince their subordinates to do things. They are skilled at articulating issues and conceptualizing possibilities by sharing their train of thought. They possess the necessary knowledge to assist and support their followers effectively (Liden et al., 2008). Exemplary supervisors use both sources of power and influence tactics as a means to persuade followers in one direction or another. The effectiveness of influence tactics demonstrated by the leader indicated that rational influence behaviors were more effective than forceful influence tactics (Yukl & Michel, 2006). Mapping lends itself to an inspirational, futuristic approach to rational influence (Yukl & Michel, 2006).

Finally, in terms of organizational stewardship, supervisors also manifest this value to a great extent. This means that employees perceive their supervisors as moral beings who function positively in the community. This is considered as extending leadership beyond the organization by taking responsibility for the well-being of the community. Exemplary supervisors ensure that strategies and decisions undertaken will reflect a commitment to give back to the larger community.

Table 3. Significant Difference on Servant Leadership among Government Supervisors when grouped According to Profile Variables

Dimensions	Gender	Age	Educational Attainment	Number of Years as Supervisors
Altruistic calling	.850	.080	.450	.380
Emotional healing	.450	.502	.520	.260
Wisdom	.255	.051	.080	.700
Persuasive mapping	.001*	.350	.500	.250
Organizational Stewardship	.420	.870	.450	.300

*significant at .05 level

Table 3 shows the significant difference in servant leadership among government supervisors when grouped according to profile variables. The table shows that there is no significant difference in servant leadership among government supervisors when grouped according to educational attainment and number of years as supervisors. Furthermore, there is no significant difference in servant leadership among government employees along the dimensions of altruistic calling, emotional healing, wisdom, and organizational stewardship when grouped according to gender. In addition, there is no significant difference in servant leadership among government employees along emotional healing, persuasive mapping, and organizational stewardship when grouped according to age. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. Finally, there is a significant difference in servant leadership among government employees along persuasive mapping when grouped according to gender. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 3a. Post-Hoc Test Analysis on the Significant Difference on Servant Leadership among Government Supervisors along Persuasive Mapping when grouped According to Gender

Gender	Mean	T-Value	P-Value	Decision
Male	3.35	4.200	.000	Reject Ho
Female	3.05			

Table 3a shows the post-hoc test analysis of the significant difference in servant leadership among government supervisors along persuasive mapping when grouped according to gender. The table shows that male supervisors have a higher manifestation of persuasive mapping than female supervisors. This means that male supervisors are better in terms of persuasion and convincing skills than female supervisors. Previous studies affirm the results of the study, stressing that males have a higher tendency to perform better in conversation than females, who tend to be more emotional and subjective (Carli, 2001; Pelled & Xin, 2000).

IV. CONCLUSION

The study concluded that government supervisors exhibited servant leadership since they manifested the qualities of altruistic calling, emotional healing, wisdom, persuasive mapping, and organizational stewardship. They possessed the qualities of a servant-leader who shared power, put the needs of others first, and helped people develop and perform as highly as possible, as assessed by their subordinates. Government supervisors should have continued manifesting servant leadership in the organization, as it had already been revealed that they manifested this kind of leadership as perceived by their subordinates. In addition, government agencies should have continued conducting training and seminars on servant leadership, not just for the supervisors but for the whole organization. A possible extension of this study was to conduct a parallel study in other government agencies to shed light on the concept of servant leadership across all government agencies.

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