A Comprehensive Literature Review and
Critical Analysis of Servant Leadership Theory

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study was to look at the available research and literature as it relates to Servant Leadership Theory. Servant Leadership is gaining attention as a radical way to lead organizations successfully while empowering individuals through service. The old paradigm of top down management has been upended; employees are given more freedom to do their jobs while leaders serve them to success.

A comprehensive literature review was conducted to examine all facets of Servant Leadership. The study focused on the following four areas: a comprehensive overview of Servant Leadership Theory; servant leader characteristics; love, trust, and vision in Servant Leadership; and the implementation process.
The extensive literature review concluded that Servant Leadership is growing in relevance and that individuals and organizations are taking notice of the benefits. There is a multitude of criticism of the theory, but there is also a clear insight into extremely successful organizations that have a core in Servant Leadership.

Lastly, recommendations were made to assist researchers, individuals, and organizations involved or wishing to become involved with research or the implementation of Servant Leadership.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Leadership is an influence process. To engage in leadership is to influence the thoughts and actions of others, leading them toward the accomplishment of goals (Blanchard & Hodges, 2003). Therefore, “a leader is a person in a position of authority who is responsible for the results of those under his or her direction” (Blanchard & Miller, p. 10). Krieger and Simon (2005) suggest that there are over 10,000 studies on leadership, yet in a power hungry world the concept Servant Leadership surfaces. Though the principles are century’s old dating back to Jesus Christ, Servant Leadership is seeping into the walls of universities, foundations, churches, non profit institutions, businesses and the corporate world causing drastic change.

The old leadership styles based on command and control have also been around for centuries. After World War II Americans assumed the best way to run any organization was with a military type pyramid, CEO on the top, laborers and customers on the bottom (Hunter, 2004). In those types of organizations people are looked at for the work their hands can do and not for their ideas and talents as individuals.

Robert K. Greenleaf, coined the term Servant Leadership in 1970, he used those two words to describe what he felt was largely missing from organizations. Greenleaf believed that leadership should be based on serving the needs of others (Greenleaf). He defined a servant leader as someone who is a servant first, “it begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first” (Greenleaf, p. 27). Robert Greenleaf expanded this theory creating essays and literature to support the relevance and importance of Servant Leadership in today’s successful organizations.
Although Greenleaf was the founder of Servant Leadership Theory, he was not the first servant leader. Others before him like Martin Luther King Jr., Mother Teresa, Vince Lombardi and Jesus Christ may be considered servant leaders in their own right. One of the most common quotes on the basis of Servant Leadership can be found in the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus (as cited in Blanchard & Hodges, p. 3) said, “If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all.” Throughout history great leaders have magnified the characteristics of servant leaders. It goes without surprise that those same characteristics are noticeable attributes of today’s servant leaders.

There are many characteristics of a servant leader. Literature suggests no comprehensive, agreed upon list of characteristics, but themes arise that suggest a servant leader is a person who: is a good listener, is empathetic, has the ability to heal relationships, is self and surrounding aware, can persuade and convince others, conceptualizes beyond the day to day realities, foresees outcomes of situations, is committed to the professional and personal growth of others, is a good steward of resources, and is a community builder (Spears, 1998).

Servant Leadership is relevant in theory and practice, but how can the basics be implemented in organizations and are there credible resources to help? First there is a choice, “many people will study leadership, but too few dig deep inside themselves and make a choice to serve their team from the very heart of who they are” (Kahl, p. 2). Once that choice is made to put ego, needs, wants and status aside a change process begins that will transform the organization into a highly performing, well rounded community of talented and capable individuals. The researcher plans, through this study to find...
educational and training tools and recommendations for those who are and those who aspire to be Servant Leaders.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the theory of Servant Leadership including a comprehensive overview of the theory, characteristics of servant leaders, love, trust, and visions as they relate to Servant Leadership, and how Servant Leadership is implemented in organizations. This is achieved by conducting a literature review, analysis of data, a critique of the information available, and offering recommendations to researchers, individuals and organizations involved in or wishing to become involved with Servant Leadership.

Research Questions

This comprehensive review and critical analysis of research and literature on Servant Leadership addresses the following questions:

- What is Servant Leadership?
- What are the characteristics of Servant Leaders?
- What role does love, trust and vision play in Servant Leadership?
- What is the implementation process of Servant Leadership in an organization?

Limitations of the Study

There are two major limitations to this study of Servant Leadership. Servant Leadership, with its founding in 1970, is a fairly new leadership style. Therefore, literature on the subject is minimal and where it is not minimal it is redundant and
repetitive, mainly focusing on the original works of Robert Greenleaf. Second, servant leaders are most referred to in church or religious settings. This factor limited the amount of research that had a larger scope of organizations.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter is a comprehensive review of research and literature associated with Servant Leadership Theory. The first focus of the chapter is a comprehensive overview of Servant Leadership Theory consisting of research on old leadership paradigms and structures, what Servant Leadership Theory is, who the founder and what the foundations of the theory are, the biblical context of Servant Leadership, and criticisms of the theory. The second part focuses on the characteristics of Servant Leadership and what roles love, trust and vision play. The next section is focused on the implementation of Servant Leadership, which first consists of a choice, then a change in culture and finally education and training. Chapter two is conclude with examples of successful organizations involved in Servant Leadership.

Comprehensive Overview of Servant Leadership Theory

Old Leadership Paradigms

Until fifteen or twenty years ago organizational systems were in the form of organization charts, flowcharts, and timetables, all based on how to operate organizations and manage people. Follow the master plans and rules and you will automatically have an organization that runs (Aury, 2001). Leadership paradigms and structures are ever evolving and changing, yet in the twenty-first century organizations are still facing the old paradigms of leadership. It is imperative to understand the paradigms of leadership before introducing a concept that is contrary. Servant Leadership.
The old leadership paradigms resembled something like a top down pyramid, "do as I say and if I want your opinion I will ask you." The golden rule of such paradigms is "he who has the gold makes the rules" (Hunter, p.57). The order of a top down pyramid is, starting on the bottom: employees, supervisors, middle managers, vice president and on the top, chief executive officer. This top down model of leadership dates back to centuries of wartime and monarchies. It should be no surprise that after victories people would return home believing that top down dictatorship worked and was the way to get things done (Hunter, 1998). "There was a time not so long ago when supervisors and managers were expected to "control" their factory, shop or office. They led by administrative fiat. They gave orders, issued edicts and made rules. They managed by fear and motivated by inventive intimidation and coercion" (Ramsey, p. 3).

Hunter (1998) captures the essence of a bad leader expressing how they often get in the way instead of moving obstacles out of the way. He referred to them as seagull managers. "A seagull manager is one who periodically flies into the area, makes a lot of noise, dumps on people, maybe eats their lunch and flies away" (p. 63). "Many leaders spend their time pondering their rights as leaders instead of their awesome responsibilities as leaders" (p. 64). Secular leadership is based on power. "You’re a leader when you’re in charge, when people work for you and you call the shots" (Rinehart, p. 17). In this form of leadership workers are expected to follow rules and obey instructions without question (Ramsey, 2003).

Leadership was not about service, it was about the power associated with being in charge (Ramsey, 2003). That power was the ability to force or coerce people to do what you wanted or needed them to do, they had no choice, your position said so. That power
may have gotten things done but people, their ideals and talents were lost in the process (Hunter, 2004). It was almost as if to say, you are a good employee from the neck down. We want your hands to do the work, forget about your talents, ideas and thoughts.

Something happened, something that would change the course of leadership. Ramsey (2003) suggests that technology, split-second communication, erratic economic mood swings, bruising global competition and increasingly fragmented careers are a direct link to a change in leadership. Employees do not want more rules; they want more slack to perform their jobs well. They want and expect to be listened to, to be kept in the communication loop, to be informed of what is going on in the organization, whether good or bad, they want to know what is coming down the road, and they want opportunities to grow and share in decision making and the success of profit.

And although workers today want and expect those things, leading by power is still alive and well. Douglas (2005) suggests that leading with power, individualism, unilateral decision making and mandates from the executives will not work anymore.

What is Servant Leadership?

The concept of Servant Leadership is at hand. In a world of power and ego a concept focused on serving others before oneself surfaces. Servant and leader are two words that are not often seen in the same sentence. Is it possible that they could be combined to create a revolutionary form of leadership, Servant Leadership? Robert K. Greenleaf, the founder of Servant Leadership Theory stated, “the great leader is seen as a servant first, and that simple fact is the key to his greatness” (Greenleaf, p.27). A servant
leader “is a servant first…. It begins with a natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first (Greenleaf, p.27). Then conscious choice turns someone into a leader.

The Servant Leadership Theory is based on Greenleaf’s model of putting others, including employees, customers and community as the number one priority. Jennings and Stahl-Wert (2003) adds that it is a holistic approach to work, promotion of sense of community and sharing of power. Jack Kahl (2004), former Wal-Mart Chief Executive Officer calls servant leadership the beginning and end point of leadership. It is the role of the servant leader to grow leaders at all levels, to make them self obsolete as a benefit to others in the organization.

Servant Leadership upends the old paradigms pyramid and places the employees at the top. According to Johnson (2001), “the advantages of the servant leadership model are its altruism, simplicity, and self-awareness. It emphasizes the moral sense of concern for others, reducing the complexity engendered by putting personal desires in conflict with those of followers” (p. 136). With the leader or CEO on the bottom their role changes, their responsibly is to define reality instead of creating their own, they must become a servant and a debtor to those working with them and show gratitude in all situations, that is the role of a servant leader.

The current CEO of the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, Larry Spears, says this about Servant Leadership:

As we near the end of the twentieth century, we are beginning to see that traditional autocratic and hierarchical modes of leadership are slowly yielding to a newer model – one that attempts to simultaneously enhance the personal growth of workers and improve the quality and caring of our many institutions through a
combination of teamwork and community, personal involvement in decision making, and ethical and caring behavior (www.greenleaf.org).

**Founder and Foundations of Servant Leadership Theory**

The term of Servant Leadership was first coined in a 1970 essay by Robert K. Greenleaf, entitled *The Servant Leader*. Greenleaf was born in Terre Haute, Indiana. He spent much of his time involved with management research, development, and education in his position at AT&T for forty years. After his time at AT&T he was a consultant for twenty-five years. His concept of servant as leader was a culmination of his lifelong work experiences and the influence of *Journey to the East*, a novel by Herman Hesse.

*Journey to the East* is about a group of men on a mythical, spiritual journey. The central character of the story is Leo, the servant on the journey who does chores sustains the others with his spirit and songs. Leo had a presence about him so when he disappeared the journey ended because the rest of the group could not continue without their servant. The narrator of the story was one of the men on the journey, who years later discovered that Leo was a part of the religious order that sponsored their journey.

After reading this story, Greenleaf concluded that the central meaning was that the great leader is first experienced as a servant to others, and that this simple fact is the central to his or her greatness. True leadership emerges from those whose primary motivation is a deep desire to help others (Greenleaf, p. 4).

Leo went without notice as a servant to others on the spiritual journey to the east. The group could not function without their servant, little did they know he was so much more, he was their leader.
Greenleaf passed away in 1990, but until his death he continued writing about the themes of management, servanthood, organizations, power and spirituality. His memory and the Servant Leadership model have been carried on by the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership. His work has been immortalized in his writings and has been carried on in current literature pertaining to Servant Leadership. He is still look at as the leader, servant leader rather of the movement towards serving others first.

**Biblical/Religious Context of Servant Leadership**

Whether you believe that Jesus Christ is Lord and that he died for your sins is of no importance when discussing the biblical context of Servant Leadership. The researcher could not excuse this aspect of Servant Leadership as it is mentioned in almost all of the literature reviewed for this study. The Standard Revised Version of the bible references the words servant, service, and serve over 1300 times (Greenleaf, 1998).

Servant leadership has its roots in the person of Jesus, the Gospels, and the early church (Koch, 2002). The verse that most often appeared in literature comes from the Gospels. Jesus (as cited in Blanchard & Hodges) addressing his apostles telling them how to go out and lead He said:

> Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave-just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many (p. 5).

> “In His, ‘not so with you’ instructions to His first disciples on how they were to lead, Jesus sent a clear message to all those who would follow Him that leadership has to be first and foremost an act of service. No plan B was implied or offered in His words...”
(Blanchard & Hodges, p. A2). Hunter (2004) called Jesus Christ the greatest leader ever. Refer to any definition of leadership and Jesus fits the mold. Leadership is about influence. Is there any other human being in the history of the world who has had the amount of influence as Jesus? Wells (as cited in Hunter, 2004) an author, historian, atheist, and harsh critic of Christianity had this to say:

I am an historian, I am not a believer, but I must confess as an historian that this penniless preacher from Nazareth is irrevocably the very center of history. Jesus Christ is easily the most dominant figure in all of history (p. 71).

And yet there are more statistics that support the mark Jesus left on our world. One-third of planet's population, more than two billion people, call themselves Christian. Many countries around the world base national holidays around the events of Jesus Christ. “No intellectually honest person can deny that this solitary life had great influence on history. And He still has it today” (p. 72).

Reinhart (p. 72) explained how Jesus led in the following ways, possibly giving insight into his legitimate power and greatness as a leader.

- Jesus publicly confronted the power-oriented, legalistic system and its leaders.
- His leadership style was that of a servant, even though He truly had all the power and authority of heaven.
- He instructed His followers in unity, love and servant hood, teaching the importance of community.
- He did not speak of an organization, institution, or any specific structure through which the apostles were to facilitate the spread of the gospel.
- When the religious establishment sought His death, He submitted.
By any definition, Jesus is the ultimate example of a great leader. What happened to our society that has taken away from the clear insights Jesus gave us about leadership? The Industrial Revolution brought us its mass production quota and standardization mentality.

The idea of the revolution was to be efficient, creating more in less time.

As this kind of philosophy invaded the church, it produced something akin to a “McChristian.” Individual distinctiveness and contributions were blurred, usually in favor of doing more, faster... the idea is that by repeating the same steps, in the same order, with steady attention, one can produce maturing believers in a manner similar to mass produced burgers and fries (Reinhart, p. 116).

Warren (2003) says this about service, “you are going to give your life for something. What will it be- a career, a sport, a hobby, fame, wealth? None of these things will have lasting significance. Service is the pathway to real significance” (p. 232). Servant Leadership, based on serving others and putting their needs before your own, dates back over 2000 years and is making a come back in successful organizations nationwide.

Criticism of Servant Leadership Theory

Robert Greenleaf (1977) in his first writings of servants emerging as leaders acknowledged that his ideas were not popular. He also acknowledges that criticism of Servant Leadership does have its’ place. “In a time of crisis, like the leadership crisis we are now in, if too many potential builders are taken in by a complete absorption with dissecting the wrong and by a zeal for instant perfection, then the movement so many of us want to see will be set back. The danger, perhaps, is to hear the analyst too much and the artist too little” (Greenleaf, p. 25).
There are always skeptics and in the case of Servant Leadership there is an ample amount of doubt and criticism of the foundations of the theory. Hunter (2004), while traveling, encountered many people who were skeptical about Servant Leadership. They argued that it was too warm and fuzzy, a passive style of leadership. Whetstone (2002) questions Servant Leadership, wondering if it is too good to be true. Servant Leadership is also criticized for seeming encouraging passivity, not working in every context, sometimes serving the wrong cause, and being associated with the negative connotation of the term servant (or slave) (Johnson, 2001). Servant Leadership is about shifting away from the old paradigms pyramid. That is why some object that it is unrealistic. It is seen as weak, not fitting with our egocentric natures, our assertiveness, or our will to power. It is different, and in a way threatens those wielding or seeing power in a hierarchical structure (DiStefani, 1995).

Another criticism that was found in literature is the lack of information. Greenleaf leads the field with literature, but most of the literature was developed in the seventies, things change. In much of the other literature available, there is a redundancy of information, mainly focused on what Greenleaf has already written about in his books and essays. If the literature is not based on Greenleaf’s findings, in most cases, its’ focus is on the biblical and religious context of service. “A search on amazon.com reveals a mere twenty-eight titles on Servant Leadership. Of those in print, the majority is directed primarily toward religious audiences” (Hunter, p. 21).
Characteristics of Servant Leadership

Characteristics of Servant Leaders

Character is defined by Hunter (2004) as, “our moral maturity and commitment to doing the right thing regardless of the personal costs. Character involves the will to respond to stimuli according to values and principles rather than to appetites, urges, whims or impulses” (p. 49). Greenleaf’s approach to Servant Leadership was based on the need for a better approach to leadership. That better approach culminates with a change in the paradigms and the characteristics of the people who are involved in the process.

In their book, Practicing Servant Leadership, Lawrence and Spears (2004) write about a set of ten characteristics that are important for a servant leader to possess. The characteristics are: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community. They acknowledge that their list may not be exhaustive but that the ten key points communicate the “power and promise” of Servant Leadership. It is important to note that this same list of characteristics, in multiple other forms, showed up in most of the literature. Some characteristics were switched around, the wording was changed, some characteristics were added, others were omitted but the list from Lawrence and Spears is the most comprehensive list of them all.

The first characteristic of a servant leader is the ability to listen. Everyone desires to be heard. “Being heard will allow people to become freer, wiser and more autonomous” (Koch, p. 18). Therefore, a servant leader must listen attentively to the needs and concerns of their employees. Greenleaf (1977) suggests that only a true
servant leader responds to any problem by listening first and that listening builds the strengths of other people. Spears (1998) the Chief Operating Officer of the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership also adds to the concept of listening as a way of hearing our own inner voice and seeking to understand our minds and spirits better, an essential aspect of being a successful servant leader.

The second servant leader characteristic is empathy. Greenleaf (1977) defines empathy as “the imaginative projection of one’s own consciousness into another being” (p. 33). Using the concept of empathy servant leaders are able to understand others better. “People need to be accepted and recognized for their special and unique spirits” (Spears, p. 11). It is the servant leader who empathizes with their employees who are more likely to build trust because they accept people for who they are and what they are capable of doing (Greenleaf, 1977).

The characteristic of healing is next. This is one of the greatest gifts a servant leader can share with people. Healing in the servant leader context relates to making things whole (Greenleaf, 1997). Everyone desires wholeness; it is something we all share. Therefore, the benefits of healing relationships, benefits others, benefits oneself in the process creating wholeness. A servant leader is someone who shares the ability to mend relationships, striving to make others and themselves whole at the same time.

Awareness, especially self awareness, is a strong characteristic of a servant leader. Being aware aids in understanding ethics and value issues. It also enables the servant leader to view most situations from a more integrated, holistic position (Spears, 1998). “The cultivation of awareness gives one the basis for detachment, the ability to stand aside and see oneself in perspective in the context of one’s own experience, amid the ever
present dangers, threats, and alarms” (Greenleaf, p. 41). Being aware opens your mind to creative insight.

The ability to persuade and create consensus in a group is a key for servant leaders. Greenleaf (1977) points to an American Quaker, John Woolman, as a person of great persuasion who lived in the middle of the eighteenth century. Woolman was the man who rid the Religious Society of Friends also known as Quakers, of slaves. He was not a big man in stature. His method of persuasion was unique, clear and persistent. Woolman traveled by horse and by foot to slave holders along the east coast one by one, without vindicating their actions, rather raising moral questions as to why they felt the need to be a slave owner and what their actions were teaching their children. In this way he used non judgmental arguing about a wrong that needed to be made right. Greenleaf (1977) concludes that, “leadership by persuasion has the virtue of change by conviction rather than coercion, its advantages are obvious” (p. 44).

The sixth characteristic is conceptualization, the ability to think beyond the day to day realities. It is much more than achieving short term goals. A servant leader is one who can balance the short term goals while looking to the future needs that will put a company ahead of the game. Thinking conceptually will provide a visionary approach to the future.

Foresight is similar to conceptualization but not the same. Spears (1998) suggests that the difference is that foresight allows a servant leader to use the lessons of the past, the realities of the present and the likely consequences of the future. He also acknowledges that foresight is a large unexplored area of leadership. Foresight is more about the when in the future something will occur rather then the what. Servant leaders
can foresee the future by watching trends. There are two levels of foresight. The first level is when a leader is concerned about the present, being responsible and reasonable about decisions. The second level of foresight is being detached in an attempt to get a broad view of the past, the current events and looking into the infinite future (Greenleaf, 1977).

A servant leadership possesses the characteristic of stewardship. Peter Block says this about stewardship: “Stewardship is… the willingness to be accountable for the well-being of the larger organization by operating in service, rather than in control, of those around us. Stated simply, it is accountability without control or compliance… Stewardship is the choice for service. We serve best through partnership, rather than patriarchy.” (Block as cited in Koch, p. 19). Being a good steward of the money, time and resources is something servant leaders are held accountable for.

Servant leaders are committed to the growth of others. They see others as more than workers, and more as individuals with different needs and wants. They also recognize their responsibility to lead those people to places of growth and new understanding. Servant leaders help find funds for personal and career development, they encourage team decision making, and they assist laid off workers find other employment (Spears, 1998).

The final characteristic of a servant leader is the ability to build community. Servant leaders recognize the shift from local communities to large institutions therefore they seek to create a community within the institutions they work in. Greenleaf (1977) makes an astonishing point about the shift towards community and how all people need to be in a community. Orphanages are necessary, but all people would agree that a child
needs to be in the community of a family. Hospitals are great for medical care, but the vast amount of healing happens out of the hospital and out in a community. As a society we are moving away from institutionalized care to community like homes for persons with developmental and physical disabilities. Vast numbers of elder citizens are no longer leaving their homes for nursing homes but rather assisted living communities. There is a great opportunity in the world of work to recreate a sense of community. It is the role of a servant leader to show the way through subtle changes and by leading the way to forming a community, a place for employees to belong.

To review, the ten characteristics of Spears and Lawrence (2004) are: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community. Servant leaders or those wishing to become a servant leader must have character that supports all of these areas. It is essential for the success and well-being of their organizations. “Skills are critical to effective leadership, but character is also. Many believe they can become effective leaders if they only have the skills. Others believe they can become great leaders if they could just develop their character. Both are wrong. It takes both skills and character” (Blanchard & Miller, p. 27). Hunter (2004) concurs that many excellent organizations in current time hire for character and train for skills, both are necessary.

**Transformational Leadership vs. Servant Leadership**

A study on Servant Leadership would not be complete without comparison to another leadership style. In the late 1970’s there was a shift away from the old paradigms of leadership. “Transformational Leadership is viewed as the most prominent topic in the
current research and theories of leadership” (Bass as cited in Lawler & Ochieng, p. 1086). Burns (as cited in Lawler & Ochieng) states that:

The term transforming leadership refers to individuals who recognize the existing needs of potential followers, but go further, seeing to satisfy higher needs to engage the full person of the follower in terms of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (p. 1086).

The basic needs Maslow identified are food, safety and shelter. In Transformational Leadership the focus shifts from meeting those basic needs, to higher levels of need such as esteem, self-fulfillment, and self-actualization. The basis of Transformational Leadership is to be creative, raising the level of morality; this is done through motivation, problem solving and learning.

There are four components of Transformational Leadership: charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration (Bass as cited in Lawler & Ochieng, 2003), all aimed toward a vision or goal. Unlike Servant Leadership, there is no mention of serving others first, putting the leaders needs last. As with any leadership theory or model there are downfalls. The downfalls of Transformational Leadership seem to be the basis for Servant Leadership. For example, Transformational Leadership “can ignore or downplay the contributions of followers in order to promote their own [the leaders] interests” (Kelley as cited in Whetstone, p. 387). Moreover, followers tend to become too dependant on the transformational leader as the charismatic hero” (Johnson as sited in Whetstone p. 387). Servant Leadership is not about the leader, it is about the follower and their needs. In Transformational Leadership there is a prominent and “hero.”
Such leaders as Napoleonic Bonaparte and Adolf Hitler were effective transformational leaders. There lies the most detrimental problem with the model, "it can be so effectively used for immoral ends" (Whetstone, p. 387).

A transformation leader can be effective in instilling a vision, molding the character and vision of followers to achieve that vision. But if the vision is flawed or if the leader neglects to stress principled behaviors toward the vision, the results can be tragic (Rasmussen as cited in Whetstone, p. 388).

It is evident that there are flaws with Transformational Leadership, as in any model of leadership. Essentially it comes down to the leader, how well and with how much morality they will work with their followers to reach a goal or fulfill a vision.

Although Servant Leadership and Transformational Leadership came from the same era in time where there was a shift away from old leadership paradigms, there are evident differences in the two models, how they work, and who they promote in the process.

*Love, Trust and Vision in Servant Leadership*

*Love*

As Tina Turner's song in the eighties went, you may be asking yourself, "what's love got to do with it?" Within organizations the word love is taboo. This may be because we think of love as a feeling. If you do not feel good about something you would not associate it with love. The verb "love" has been taken out of context.

"Volitional love is the love of the will. Volitional love is the choice, the willingness of a person to be attentive to the legitimate needs, best interest, and welfare of another
regardless of how he or she happens to feel on certain days” (Hunter, p. 85). C.S. Lewis (as cited in Hunter, p.85) wrote that, “love does not mean emotion. It is a state not of the feelings but of the will; that state of the will which we have naturally about ourselves, and must learn to have about other people...” Loving others is about doing the right thing; the same is true about leadership (Hunter, 2004). The heart is most often associated with the actions of love. Kahl (2004) writes about the heart as the root of all choices including the choice to lead. “Only by leading by the heart can we fully engage the power of our humanity and the passion of our team” (p. 109).

Servant Leadership and love go hand in hand. To serve people and put their needs before your own is one of the greatest ways to show love. Love, although taboo in some organizations, is an essential part of a servant leader. They must love where they work, who they work with, who they do business with, and most importantly love themselves so they are able to love others in return. Love has a place in leadership.

Trust

What is trust? Why is it important to the success of Servant Leadership? Covey (as cited in Spears, 1998) states that, “Trust is the glue of life. It’s the most essential ingredient to effective communication. It’s the foundational principle that holds all relations- marriages, families, and organizations of every kind- together (p. 68). It is trust that builds communication that in turn allows other employees to believe the words and actions that come from the Servant Leader. In that same trust people become vulnerable and willing to opening share the good and bad, knowing that they have support and can trust their fellow co-workers.
Douglas (2005) identifies three ways in which servant leaders can build trust. The
servant leader must be vulnerable, it takes strength and courage while showing others that
you are willing to admit your mistakes and ask for help. Secondly, be loyal to those not
present. Most humans are familiar with gossip, slander, talking behind each others back,
or sharing issues about a particular person with everyone but that person. The servant
leader who does not gossip and does not talk about people when they are not present
builds credibility and trust. The third and final way to build trust is through feedback.
Feedback will be discussed more in-depth later in chapter two. It is what servant leaders
do with that feedback that sets them apart from other leaders. Servant Leaders will take
the results of feedback and change and adapt to help others employees and themselves
reach the goals of the organization.

The other aspect of trust as it relates to Servant Leadership is the leader trusting
other people in order to gain their trust. Creating a trusting work environment begins
with the leader who trusts others and their capabilities to do a job. Trust is a two way
street in service. To be trusted, a servant leader must first trust.

Vision

Aubry (2001) identifies three main areas of a company’s vision: purpose, mission,
and values. Taking a closer look, the purpose of a company, in search of it’s meaning,
should answer why are we here? The language used to articulate the company’s purpose
should help all employees understand why they themselves are there. “To put it another
way, the purpose of an organization helps people define the purpose of their own
involvement (Aubry, p. 28).
The Mission is a statement that describes what will be done to fulfill the company's purpose. Unlike a company purpose, it may change as company objectives change. The bottom line in most companies is to make a profit, which is the end all. A company's mission can not be, "to make a profit." The statement must take into consideration that "because making a profit requires that the company and its employees produce something, a product or service, that fulfills the purpose with enough perceived value that people- customers- are willing to pay for that product or service. Simple enough to say, but sometimes not so simple to understand or execute" (Autry, p. 29).

Values relate to how a company will work towards their mission, fulfilling their purpose. Values should be figured out in a long term context, how the company will work for years to come to benefit the employees and the organization. "Values are fundamentally about interpersonal relationships or social architecture or culture" (Autry p. 31). Some examples of values in an organization are: communication, highly productive work teams, honesty, commitment, understanding, continuous improvement, or fun. No matter what words are used to express a company's values, the leaders must be the catalysts for following those themes and spreading them throughout the organization, encouraging a culture based on the chosen values.

It is essential to the success of a company, its' purpose, mission, and values that everyone participate in a joint process to create the statements that will drive the organization. A vision process can be done through focus groups, interviews, and surveys, to name a few. Everyone should have their mark on the process so they feel loyalty towards it and a commitment to its successes, in turn, creating loyalty and commitment to company success in the process.
Top management of many companies developed mission statements or vision statements (or both) in all the wrong ways. Rather than involve employees in the process of defining the vision, top management took it upon themselves to develop a statement which then in the top-down mode, was given to the employees (Autry p. 24).

It is a win-win situation when everyone is given the opportunity to participate in the visioning process.

*Implementation of Servant Leadership in Organizations*

*The Choice and The Change*

Becoming a servant leader begins with a choice. Are you willing to put others needs before your own? It is a conscious choice that must be made in order to be a successful servant leader. The choice is also to provide the help that the team needs to reach a goal and the choice comes from an emotional commitment to the goal (Kahl, 2004).

Once an individual or an organization makes the choice to become a servant to others first a change must take place. Change in the context of Servant Leadership involves leaders as individuals as well as the organizations in which they wish to run with servant leaders. “The servant leader’s first order of business is to upend the pyramid” (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, p. 31). The task of upending the old paradigm pyramid is two dimensional. First, the servant leader must move to the bottom of the pyramid. Secondly, the servant leader concentrates building up others in the pyramid. (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2003). Once this happens leaders will start to sense a change in the company
culture. "Culture is a set of attitudes, beliefs and values that spring almost solely from
the aggregate of every little thing a leader says and does" (Kahl, p. 78).
"Culture is not found in a grandiose vision statement. It is established by habit and
routine. Culture is the result of every decision, every day" (Kahl, p. 81). This company
cultures creates momentum around ideas, values, morals, toward financial success of the
organization.

Kahl (2004) suggests that leaders listen to the people in the organization who
know its pulse and what makes it tick, what are their needs and wants to become
successful. From there, he suggests that you literally bring the walls to life with
motivational material, signs that make employees think. The final aspect of culture is an
informal system of communication, something more than meetings, memos and signs on
the wall. It is the abilities to share stories, dialogue in the hallways and have an open
door policy with leaders.

Once these changes start taking place within an organization a breath of life will
sweep the creativity of employees. They will begin to trust leaders more. In the process
they will build loyalty to the company, the company goals and most importantly to the
success of themselves and their co-workers. It all starts with a leader’s choice to become
a servant, then a change in company culture that supports leaders in their quest to serve
others to become successful in their roles and in their life.

The Implementation Process: Education and Training

The main aspects of the implementation of Servant Leadership are education and
training. This is taking place through leadership and management courses in colleges and
universities, as well as through corporate training programs (Spears, 1998). Within companies there are resources such as Servant Leadership consultants, materials and curriculum. "Those in leadership positions need effective training in the principles of Servant Leadership to provide them with a solid working knowledge of what good leadership looks like and where they are headed as leaders" (Hunter, p. 173). Through both internal and external training, organizations are seeing firsthand the improvements and benefits associated with implementing Servant Leadership. It is important to "begin with the end in mind" (Covey as cited in Hunter, p. 173).

"Leadership is an art, something to be learned over time, not simply by reading books" (DePree, p.3). There is the age old question of, are leaders born or made? That same question can be applied to the Servant Leadership style of leading. Management guru Drucker (as cited in Hunter, p. 41) states that, "while there are some 'born leaders,' there are surely too few to depend on them. Leadership is something that must be learned." It is clear then that the transition to Servant Leadership can not be made overnight (Autry, 2001).

"Education in leadership principles without application is rather useless" (Hunter, p. 22). He continues later in his literature to explain how he often goes into organizations for Servant Leadership training three or four times, the employees are fired up, he leaves, and they do not implement his training. Hunter then gives us an insight into what organizations wishing to implement Servant Leadership need to do:

- At a minimum, we need to create an environment for people to talk about these principles on a regular basis.
• We need to create an environment in which people are supported and encouraged to grow and develop as leaders.

• We need to create an environment in which people are given little “friction” to grow and a little “push” in their quest for continuous improvement.

• We need to get the top levels of management really bought into the principles and personally practicing the discipline for all to see.

Organizations interested in implementing the change towards a servant lead environment can do so with these three essentials, all part of Hunters (2004) leadership improvement process:

• Foundation

• Feedback

• Friction

First, there must be foundations to work on, sets of standards that are expected. There are two questions that leaders must address for their employees: how am I supposed to behave and what happens if I do not behave that way? Answering those two questions will create boundaries and consequences; it is important that they are answered thoroughly. This also includes doing training so everyone has a clear understanding of the principles of Servant Leadership. An essential conclusion to a foundation is explaining the process that will be taking place over the next months and how Servant Leadership will be implemented.

The second step in Hunters (2004) process is feedback, which will identify the performance gaps. After they have received training on Servant Leadership in the first
stage, they must recognize the standard that has been set and identify where they currently perform, in there lies the gap. What is and what should be. There are tools available that companies can use to help their employees assess their leadership skills, one of them being the Leadership Skill Inventory (LSI). It is a unanimous 360-degree process that is designed to show baseline performance and is conducted every six months. The difference with regular 360-degree feedbacks that are most often used in companies is that this the LSI specifically relates to Servant Leadership principles.

This process can be very helpful to the person being evaluated. They are able to see their strengths and weaknesses identified by other people. It clearly identifies where there is a gap to be improved. The final step in the feedback stage is taking that gap and doing something with it. Too often 360-degree feedback assessments are done and the results are set aside. In order for the process to be successful steps must be identified and specific actions must be outlined that will help close the gap and create accountability to help foster improvements and success (Hunter, 2004).

The final step in this leadership improvement process is friction, or healthy tension. People in the process need to know that leadership if fully committed to the process and to their success. “To monitor and measure the changes, two SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time Bound) action-plan goals are set quarterly by each participant. These goals are developed from the feedback received from the LSI summary reports” (Hunter p. 176). Also included in the LSI is a quarterly appearance before a Continuous Improvement Panel (CIP) to talk about the LSI results, and SMART goals and plans. This entire process is an attempt to enlighten the participants and replace poor habits with healthy habits. The LSI and CIP process creates
accountability for continuous improvement between participants, human resource, immediate managers, CEO and key peers and group settings. Peers are added to provide more “friction.” Sharing with them your plans with allow them to be involved in the change process. Participants are placed in groups that do monthly assignments to practice what they are trying to make improvements on. In essence and without it being announced, the Servant Leadership characteristic of community building is fostering itself through this leadership improvement process.

There are people in organizations, everyone could probably name a few, who are traditional, who like familiar ways of doing things and who may stand in the way of changing the company towards a focus on service. How do you address those people, their issues and resistance towards Servant Leadership, and what do you do if you cannot get them to conform to service or at the very least respect the efforts of others who are trying to?

Hunter (2004) suggests that leaders must question the paradigms of leadership believed by their employees. In a culture of clichés this factor is evident, “you can’t teach an old dog new tricks, or a leopard can’t change its spots.”

It is true that change can be uncomfortable and difficult, and some will resist change more fervently than others. Abraham Maslow, the American psychologist made famous by his “hierarchy of human needs” model, reminds us of the powerful safety and security needs are and, once met, how they must be resisted for continued change and growth (Hunter, p. 152).

It is evident through research that change is a learned behavior. Wheelis (as cited in Hunter, 2004) has created four stages of human change: suffering, insight, will, and
change. In the first stage of suffering a leader must recognize that this people do not like leaving their comfort zone, whether it be something small like their workspace or something large like traditional leadership styles. Covey (as cited in Spears, 1998) believes that personal change is pain. In pain there is suffering.

The second stage is insight. It is the leader’s job to make the resistor aware of how their behaviors are affecting the organization. Leaders must make aware to the person that change is possible. Once the resistor agrees that change is possible there must be an agreement that, although change may be difficult, there is commitment to the process and that they are ready to change and grow. Insight that is shared correctly can give hope to the resistor.

Hunter (2004) believes that our actions and our intentions equal our will, the third stage in the process. What is needed for the resistor to change is absolute commitment. Being committed means aligning your will, your actions and your intentions, toward the readiness and willingness to change. Will must prevail until the behaviors become habit. The final step of the process is the actual change. Covered previously if you recall, one must define the specifications, identify any deviations from those specifications and eliminate the deviation.

Imagine if you will that you have taken the resistor through this process of suffering, insight, will and change and you would still refer to this person as a resistor. Are there grounds for termination, do you let this person remain the resistor in your culture of service, do you keep taking them through the process hoping they will accept it and commit? A leader must assess the pros and cons of the resistor’s behavior, possibly consult other leaders on how they perceive this individual and their behaviors and act
accordingly. If this person is not willing to change and conform to the company culture are they worth keeping in the organization. “Occasionally there are casualties, but we have found this with less than 2 percent...” (Hunter, p. 179). The company must decide what will and will not be tolerated in regards to change, or lack there of.

**Real Leaders, Real Issues**

After the implementation process of Servant Leadership in an organization and as time develops servant leaders will start emerging in the organization, if all goes as planned. Just like all other leaders in any other organization there are real problems that servant leaders will encounter with employees they lead. Some issues that may occur relate to sickness and disability, family sickness and disability, alcoholism and substance abuse, office romances, sexual harassment and legal issues (Autry, 2001).

It’s how a servant leader responds and acts in those situations that set them apart from other leaders. Because servant leader’s characteristics are listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community, they react differently than leaders who jump to conclusion, act out of anger, and ultimately break down trust.

Take for instance the event that an employee becomes sick or disabled. Autry (2001) acknowledges that he does not have a sound answer on what to do, nor will anyone else. Each case must be handled individually because all circumstances are not alike. A servant leader’s obligation rests in two areas, the sick employee and all of the other employees. He gave the example of an employee who became ill with cancer but wanted to stay at work. As a servant leader should you let that person stay at work, how
will the other employees react, what if allowing the ill person stay affects the
organizations productivity? "The answer should always begin with the desires of the
employee" (Autry, p. 123). He also chooses to put the organizational responsibilities last.
It may be healing for the sick individual to stay on the job; it may be the best part of their
day because they are in a community that supports them. At some point that employee
will probably come to their leader with understanding that they can no longer perform
their job and they will ask to be let go. Overall, the servant leaders role "is to give the
resources they need and to assure the environment and conditions in which they can do
their best work, then we should abandon the myth that all employees can be treated
equally" (Autry, p. 131).

Another scenario that we have faced or will one day face is that of office
romance. Most companies have policies against dating within the office, or not hiring
husbands and wives, or if people get married and work at the same place one of them are
fired. "I think these policies are nonsense, out of touch with the real world while
pretending to be 'real-world tough,' and clearly in violation of the precepts of Servant
Leadership" (Autry, p. 138). He does admit there are times when a leader must act:

- The participant may become preoccupied with one another that they begin
to ignore their work.
- The participants may be inappropriately open in their display of affection.
- One participant in the romance may cool the relationship while the other
may want to hold on.

The reality of office romance is that it has the potential of leading to something that could
cause problems with the community built on service. A servant leader should pay close
attention to these situations, listen, be empathic, deal with them on individual bases, and do what is best for everyone involved.

There are many personal and organizational issues that servant leaders will encounter. It is a continuous balancing act to make sure that each case is treated individually and ethically. Through the process servant leaders will encounter issues with loyalty, conflict, responsibilities to family and community life, and when things go wrong and times are bad (Autry, 2001). It is in these times that the true essence and characteristics of Servant Leadership are practiced.

Organizations with Servant Leadership at Their Core

Servant Leadership may seem overwhelming at this point in your reading. There is a choice, change, education and training, and to top it off there are characteristics needed to be a successful servant leader. There is hope in knowing that organizations have implemented Servant Leadership and it has caused positive and drastic changes.

In Fortune’s recent installment of the ‘100 Best Companies to Work For,’ more than one-third, thirty-five-plus organizations, are involved in the servant leadership movement and/or specifically identify Servant Leadership as a core operating principle. Four of the top five on the list specifically practice servant leadership: the Container Store, Synovus Financial, TDIndustries, and Southwest Airline (Hunter, p. 18).

Toro, a manufacturer of mowing, spraying and irrigation equipment was on the brink of bankruptcy. The CEO and COO abandoned the Company along with approximately half of the company’s employees. In stepped Ken Melrose as the new
CEO, Melrose saw a great opportunity to transform the Toro Organization. He researched leadership styles of Covey and Blanchard as he embraced the concept of Servant Leadership. The company still exists today and Melrose still serves as the CEO. The entire organization has embraced Servant Leadership (Hein, 2003).

TDIndustries, a Dallas based plumbing and contracting company, is ranked the seventh best company to work for by Fortune magazine. TDIndustries is one of the first companies to implement Servant Leadership. In the 1970's, the company's founder Jack Lowe Sr., was trying and failing to grow leaders in the construction business. He recognized the need for some sort of leadership training. It was slightly convenient that he and Greenleaf were friends. To this day all employees share the belief that managers should serve their employees (Greenleaf, 1998).

Charlie Bresler, executive vice president of Men's Wearhouse stores, human development and marketing says this about Servant Leadership, "it's about sub-ordinating your immediate self interest for the needs of others. The more you do it, the more you become aware of it and want to do it, and then it becomes natural" (Bresler as cited in Hein, p. 2). He knows this because the teachings of Greenleaf are embedded in the Men's Wearhouse company policy. District managers of the stores are required to spend a designated amount of money on social outings such as potlucks or family bowling nights. "Part of my role is to help other people manifest their dreams. It's not that my own dreams are not important; it's just that you need to balance your dreams with those of others. I have great kids, and a great wife... I'm trying to help other people in addition to myself. It's not about self-sacrificing. It's about wanting to help others" (Bresler as cited in Hein, p. 2).
Southwest Airlines has continuously been looked at for their outstanding ability to succeed through adversity. They are the only airline that has made profits since September 11th and attribute their success to a culture based on Servant Leadership. There is an extreme amount of loyalty to the company’s success that after the attacks the company’s three top leaders chose to work without pay through the end of the year and other staff voluntarily raised money to keep the company going. It has never been an option for Southwest to lay any of their employees off and to show their extreme dedication to their workforce they added millions of dollars to profit sharing just three days after the attacks (Roberts, 2003).

Conclusion

As the research shows, Servant Leadership is a revolutionary way for leaders to serve their employees seeds before their own. There is a shift from the old leadership paradigms and structures. Servant Leadership is upending the old pyramid placing employees at the top and leaders at the bottom where they can serve their employees and help them grow. The leaders who are working at the bottom of the pyramid as servants have the characteristics of listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community. Implementation of Servant Leadership is a key application of this movement. It all starts with the choice to become a servant leader, then a change in culture and finally a need for education and training. There are a number of successful organizations practicing Servant Leadership everyday.
The concepts of Servant Leadership date back to the era of Jesus Christ and his leadership with his apostles. Robert Greenleaf founded Servant Leadership in 1970 after seeing a need for changes in his own work places. And although Servant Leadership is gaining popularity, there are still skeptics who fear that this leadership style is too passive, too warm and fuzzy. It is also evident that there is a lack of literature surrounding the theory. There is redundancy in regards to Greenleaf’s writing and others who are just recreating what he has already said about the theory and where there is not redundancy there is a focus on the religious sector of service.

Although there are successful organizations implementing Servant Leadership, updated literature, specifically not focusing on the religious or biblical contexts, is necessary for organizations to gain the knowledge and understanding surrounding the concept of Servant Leadership Theory in the ever changing world of work.
CHAPTER THREE: DISCUSSION

Introduction

Chapter three begins with a summary of the literature review on Servant Leadership. The second section will be a critical analysis regarding the foundations and founder of Servant Leadership, biblical and religious context of the theory, criticisms, characteristics of servant leaders, the role love, trust and vision play, the implementation process concluding with a look at organizations that are implementing Servant Leadership followed by the limitations of this study. Lastly, the chapter offers recommendations for organizations or individuals who are or who wish to be service based.

Summary

Until fifteen or twenty years ago organizational systems were in the form of organization charts, flowcharts, and timetables, all based on how to operate organizations and manage people. Follow the master plans and rules and you will automatically have an organization that runs (Autry, 2001). It is imperative to understand the paradigms of leadership before introducing a concept that is contrary, Servant Leadership.

The old leadership paradigms resembled something like a top-down pyramid where the person on top gives orders, make all of the rules and lead by intimidation and coercion. Leadership was not about service, it was about the power associated with being in charge (Ramsey, 2003). Something happened; Ramsey (2003) suggests that technology, split-second communication, erratic economic mood swings, bruising global
competition and increasingly fragmented careers are a direct link to a change in leadership.

Robert K. Greenleaf's, after years of work at AT&T, a career in leadership consulting and the novel Journey to the East, created the concept of Servant Leader in the 1970's. The basis of the model is "the great leader is seen as a servant first, and that simple fact is the key to his greatness" (Greenleaf, p.27). Servant Leadership upends the old paradigms pyramid and places the employees at the top. Robert Greenleaf passed away in 1990, but until his death he continued writing about the themes of management, servanthood, organizations, power and spirituality.

An important part of the study focuses on the biblical and religious contest of Servant Leadership. The theory has roots in Jesus, the Gospels and the early church (Koch, 2002). The Standard Revised Version of the bible references the words servant, service, and serve over 1300 times (Greenleaf, 1998). Jesus is a prominent servant leader figure. Refer to any definition of leadership and Jesus fits the mold. Leadership is about influence and is there any other human being in the history of the world who has had the amount of influence as Jesus?

Just like any theory or model there are critics of Servant Leadership. Greenleaf (1997) acknowledged that his idea would not be popular among leaders, but that in a time when leadership is in crisis Servant Leadership gives hope. The skeptics argue that Servant Leadership is too warm, fuzzy and passive (Hunter, 2004). The word servant can also be linked the negative connotation of slave. (Johnson, 2001). Because Servant Leadership requires a shift in the old paradigms critics say it is unrealistic (DiStefani, 1995). The final criticism is the lack of literature and information. There is a sizable
amount of redundancy and pre-fabrication of Greenleaf’s original work and where there is not redundancy the focus shift to biblical or religious references.

This study on Servant Leadership than shifted to the characteristics that servant leaders possess. Lawrence and Spears (2004) write about a set of ten characteristics that are important for a servant leader to possess. The characteristics are: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community. Those ten characteristics are the true essence of servant leaders and those who wish to become a servant leader must have character that supports all of these areas. It is essential for the success and well being of a serving organization.

In the 1970’s another leadership style emerged, Transformational Leadership. This study looked at the characteristics of that model: charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration (Ochieng & Lawler, 2003). The main difference between Servant Leadership and Transformational Leadership is that in Servant Leadership the leader serves others while trying to stay “invisible.” In Transformational Leadership there is a leader who stands out, that people turn to as their “hero,” and someone who the followers are dependent on.

Love, trust and vision are all a part of Servant Leadership. In most organizations love is looked at as taboo, but Servant Leadership and love go hand in hand. To serve people and put their needs before your own is one of the greatest ways to show love. Loving others is about doing the right thing; the same is true about leadership (Hunter, 2004)
Trust is the glue of life. It's the most essential ingredient to effective communication. It's the foundational principle that holds all relations—marriages, facilties, and organizations of every kind—together (Covey as cited in Spears, p. 68). Douglass (2005) identifies three ways that servant leaders can gain trust: be vulnerable, be loyal to those not present and accept feedback and make changes.

Vision, according to Autry (2001), also has three components: purpose, mission, and values. A service organization allows everyone to participate in the creation of those three areas. The role of the servant leader is to be the catalyst in the organization that walks and talks based on the purpose, mission, and values identified by everyone.

The next area of the study focused on the implementation of Servant Leadership, which begin with a choice to be a servant leader or to have a servant based organization followed by a change. “The servant leader’s first order of business is to upend the pyramid” (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, p. 31). The culture of the organization will start changing then education and training must take place. Hunter (2004) created three essentials to a leadership improvement process: foundation, feedback and friction.

Setting foundations of expectation and general understands is the first thing, then gaining feedback through 360 degree assessments, and finally having accountability, that may cause internal or external friction, with others in the organization. This area of the study also focused on how to deal with a person who is resistant to change.

Servant leaders are real leaders in a real world and face personal and organizational issues on a daily basis. Some issues may include sickness and disability, family sickness and disability, alcoholism and substance abuse, office romances, sexual harassment and legal issues (Autry, 2001). It is how a servant leader responds and acts in
those situations that set them apart from other leaders. It is in these times that the true essence and characteristics of Servant Leadership are practiced.

This study of Servant Leadership concluded with examples of organizations that have the model at the core what they do and who they are. The companies, Toro, TDIndustries, Men’s Wearhouse, and Southwest Airlines had different struggles facing them ranging from the brink of bankruptcy, catastrophic world events, employee reduction and numerous other losses. These companies lead the industry in Servant Leadership and are prime examples that if practiced in every aspect of every day, success is inevitable.

Critical Analysis

There were four research questions that this study addressed:

- What is Servant Leadership?
- What are the characteristics of Servant Leaders?
- What role does love, trust, and vision play in Servant Leadership?
- What is the implementation process of Servant Leadership in an organization?

The following is a critical analysis of the research questions.

What is Servant Leadership?

The majority of literature used in this study started with the question of how the two words servant and leader combine to make Servant Leadership. Servant Leadership is based on a leader’s ability to put others needs before their own. Robert K. Greenleaf was the founder of this theory in the 1970’s. He saw a need to change the old ways of
leading. For many post war years, people believed that leading with coercion and fear was successful. In a way yes, it was successful, there was a widget produced as the end result. In that process people, their unique minds, ideas and talents were left outside of the company walls. Something changed, technology, the economy, and most importantly a persons desire to feel needed, accepted and heard. Servant Leadership is based on leading in a way that allows individuals to showcase their abilities because a leader has given them everything they need to complete a job to the best of their ability.

Another aspect that most Servant Leadership literature covered is the biblical and religious context. Most literature acknowledged Jesus as the first servant leader and as a man, because of his obvious ability to influence, as one of the best leaders of all time. It has been over 2000 years since Jesus walked this earth but he has left a mark that is still influencing the way billions of people live their lives. When you boil it all down, a man who humbled himself and served, is still one of the most prominent people in the movement towards a servant lead world.

Servant Leadership has worked in many successful organizations. This study focused on four of them. Although much of the literature did focus on the link between servant leadership it is apparent that there is a link and that companies that implement Servant Leadership into everything they do, everyday, are benefiting from the outcomes.

What are the characteristics of Servant Leaders?

Character and characteristics are the very essence of what makes servant leaders successful. There were ten characteristics that were presented essential for a servant
leader to possess: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community.

When a servant leader listens they are making sure that someone else is being heard. Servant leaders do not jump to conclusions but rather listen to all sides and draw conclusions from what those involved say. Being empathetic to the needs, wants, personal issues, and daily successes and struggles of others is how a servant leader expresses the characteristic of empathy. A servant leader is a healer. They are able to make things whole, or right, such as conflict, dissatisfaction, and relationships. They are able to help others mend whatever is broken. A servant leader is self aware as well as aware of external situations. Being aware enables them to take a holistic approach, with many perspectives, to issues or problems. The ability to persuade is a key for servant leaders. This characteristic helps company's move away from leadership by coercion. With persuasion people are able to see how they will benefit from a change or implementation of something new. The sixth characteristic of Servant Leadership is conceptualization. Conceptualization allows the servant leader to think beyond the now and helps them focus on long term goals and needs to attain those goals while still working on short term goals. Foresight, somewhat similar to conceptualization, is the ability to forecast, using what is known of the past and present to predict and prepare for the future. Stewardship is best summed up using one word, accountability. Being a good steward, servant leader's use resources wisely while helping others succeed, tying into the attribute of helping others grow. The final, most important characteristic of a servant leader is the ability to build community. The concept of community has seen drastic changes over the years. There is a great opportunity to recreate community within an
organization, making it a place where people feel accepted, supported, and encouraged. Skills are necessary to do any job, but it is the character of an individual that makes them successful.

What role does love, trust, vision play in Servant Leadership?

No study of Servant Leadership would be complete without discussion on the area of love, trust, and vision. The word love is seen as taboo in the world of work. A servant leader must love themselves, love their jobs, and love the people they serve to be a successful servant leader.

Trust is the key to communication; communication is the key to success. Servant Leaders need to trust others so that they can be trusted in return. They build trust by being open and vulnerable in all situations. Trust is an essential part of Servant Leadership.

A shared vision creates loyalty to a company and its success. Servant Leaders, with the input of everyone, use a visioning process to form a purpose, mission, and values. Those three elements are based a company's role in the world, what they hope to accomplish and the ways in which they will act to achieve success.

What is the implementation process of Servant Leadership in an Organization?

Servant Leadership begins with a choice. That choice is to put serving others at the forefront of what a company or individuals at company do. After the choice is made to move towards a company based on service a change must take place. Through setting a foundation, continuous feedback and with some amount of healthy friction Servant
Leadership can be made possible. Once implemented, a leadership improvement process, including 360-degree feedback and professional development must occur. In order to make a successful change, everyone needs to be on the same page and resisters must be addressed, it is then when a culture of service will fill the walls of an organization.

Limitations of the Study

There were two major limitations to this study of Servant Leadership. Servant Leadership, with its founding in 1970, is a fairly new leadership style. Therefore, literature on the subject is minimal and where it is not minimal it is redundant and repetitive, mainly focusing on the original works of Robert Greenleaf. Second, servant leaders are most referred to in church or religious settings. This factor limited the amount of research that had a larger scope of organizations.

Recommendations

The recommendations are threefold. First, recommendations will be made to the researchers of Servant Leadership. Second, recommendations will be made to individuals involved or who wish to be involved in Servant Leadership. Finally, recommendations will be made to organizations who are or who wish to become Servant Leadership based.

Recommendations to researchers:

1. It is recommended that research be conducted as it relates to other cultures and how receptive people of different ethnicities and religious backgrounds will receive Servant Leadership within their organization.
2. It is recommended that research be conducted to show how Servant Leadership will work in a family setting.

3. It is recommended to avoid writing more literature based on the Greenleaf's original findings. There is an abundance of such literature in print. It is recommended that research be updated to current times.

Recommendations to individuals:

1. It is recommended that people make the choice to become a Servant Leader.

2. It is recommended that people accept the change process when organizations choose to implement Servant Leadership.

3. It is recommended that people read literature and research on Servant Leadership and build a foundation on its principles.

Recommendations to Organizations:

1. It is recommended that organizations implement Servant Leadership.

2. It is recommended that organizations are sensitive to cultural and ethnic differences when implementing Servant Leadership.

3. It is recommended that organizations research other organizations that are successful in the realm of Servant Leadership, taking notice as to how they implemented change and created a culture of service.
REFERENCES


