

Exploring: **Servant Leadership**



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Overview of Evidence-Based Approach

“Evidence-based practice is about making decisions through the conscientious, explicit and judicious use of the best available evidence from multiple sources by:

1. **Asking:** translating a practical issue or problem into an answerable **research question**
2. **Acquiring:** systematically searching for and retrieving the evidence
3. **Appraising:** critically judging the trustworthiness and relevance of the evidence
4. **Aggregating:** weighing and pulling together the evidence
5. **Applying:** incorporating the evidence in the decision-making process
6. **Assessing:** evaluating the outcome of the decision taken

To increase the likelihood of a favorable outcome”

(<http://www.cebma.org/a-definition-of-evidence-based-management/>).

Key Points to Explore (The Research Questions)

- What is Servant Leadership?
- What are the Benefits and Drawbacks?
- Where is it Most Applicable?



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Discussion Outline

- Background
- Definition
- Characteristics
- Expected Impact
- Pro's and Con's
- Applicability



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Servant Leadership: Background

- The concept of Servant Leadership is not new
- By some accounts the concept goes back millennia
- The term was coined in the 1970's by Robert K. Greenleaf in his essay "The Servant as Leader"
- It claims to help people develop and achieve as highly as possible
- The current resurgence may be attributed to the need for optimizing a management model for 'knowledge workers'.

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Servant Leadership: Definition

Servant Leadership is:

- A leadership style...
- Guided by a philosophy and practices...
- To support team member development, well being, and evolution...
- Enabling team members to achieve a high level of performance...
- And personal satisfaction with their contribution.



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Servant Leadership: Characteristics

Traditional Leadership Style:

- The leader defines the vision, mission, and facilitates strategy
- The leader serves to establish goals and objectives
- The leader holds the team accountable to achieve the goals

Servant Leadership Style:

- The servant leader serves others, rather being served by others
- Serving others comes by helping them to improve and achieve

Servant Leadership: Characteristics

Key Characteristics Include:

- Empathy
- Awareness
- Team Building
- Persuasion
- Conceptualization
- Growth



Note:

Each identified characteristic is NOT unique to Servant Leadership, but rather the collection of characteristics!

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Servant Leadership: Expected Impact

Servant Leadership facilitates multiple impacts:

- Trust – A greater degree of trust of the leader (vs transactional leadership)
- Employee Development – A high focus on the individual's development plan
- Task Performance – Due to skill development (but not due to trust)
- Organizational Citizenship Behavior – Vesting and caring of the organization

“Servant leaders tend to build trustworthy relationships with followers and create a psychologically safe and fair climate where employees strongly feel they can be themselves, make their own decisions and feel connected to others, which naturally leads to the adoption of helpful behaviors towards colleagues and conscientious behaviors in favor of the organization.” (Saleem et al. 2020)

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Servant Leadership: Pro's and Con's

Pro's (Desirable Positive Attributes):

- Similar to 'Expected Impact' – Improved leadership trust, focused employee development, task performance improvement, and stewardship behavior.

Con's (Challenges and Concerns):

- **Difficulty in Driving Measurable Results** – When clear financial, operational, or market objectives are top priority, traditional management is advantageous.
- **Difficulty in Driving Regimented Behavior** – When tasks must be performed in a precise manner, in a low flexibility environment.
- **Difficulty Crossing Styles** – Managers who position themselves to their teams as their servants one day then discipline or fire them the next invite cynicism.

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Servant Leadership: **Applicability**

- **Management of Knowledge Workers** – Where high creativity is needed, and to encourage (low-fear) risk taking.
- **Development of Future Leaders** – Where soft skills and culture is being developed, cultivated, or communicated.
- **Where Servitude is Valued More Than Economics** – Religious, counseling, childcare and child development organizations, etc...



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Servant Leadership: Closing Thoughts

- **Servant Leadership** is a GOOD style for developing future leaders, culture expansion, soft skills training, and navigating uncharted waters.
- **Traditional, Transformational, and Transactional** management styles are GOOD styles for establishing vision, mission, goals, objectives and driving financial, operational and specific tactical accomplishment.

“Fortunately it is possible to develop a collaborative, supportive, empathetic, engaging, empowering and developmental relationship with employees without taking on the extreme servant label.” (McCrinon, 2010)

- **Consider Hybrid Leadership Model** – Leverage Traditional, Transformational, and Transactional modes to establish the business and drive objectives – together with elements of Servant Leadership to lead knowledge workers, develop culture, and grow future leaders.

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