

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Is servant leadership radical enough for the 21st century? The case study of an Information
Technology company in South Africa.

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on both work and daily life, which is what motivated this investigation. In addition to causing worldwide turbulence, the pandemic has challenged well-established leadership models. It suddenly became a norm for millions of people, particularly knowledge workers, to work remotely. For most organizations with remote workers for the first time the shift has resulted in a different dynamic from the management perspective. Considering the uncertainties and complexities associated with the pandemic, the question is whether servant leadership can deliver a leadership approach that can cope with the challenges of the modern workplace.

A qualitative study was conducted with a purposeful sample of IT professionals from a Cape Town-based private company. A sample of line managers from the selected company was included in the study. Study participants were interviewed through Microsoft Teams for 45-60 minutes and digitally recorded for later review. Prior to the interviews the participants were required to complete an online Google questionnaire to understand their values and beliefs.

An analysis of the interview transcripts and observations for common themes was conducted using content analysis. The study's results revealed that servant leadership, if effectively implemented, can benefit an organization, allowing employees to feel cared for and trusted, thus motivating them to provide quality service to clients. Servant leadership can also strengthen learning organizations through talent development and retention. Future directions for research are presented, along with limitations of this study.

Key terms: Leadership, Servant Leadership, Leadership theories

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ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease of 2019
IT	Information Technology
SL	Servant leadership
SLI	Servant Leadership Index
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
WHO	World Health Organization

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the research topic of servant leadership, a term first coined by Robert K Greenleaf. This chapter presents a compelling argument for pursuing this study. The study's context and the highlights of how it was conducted are explained.

The study was conducted in the Information Technology (IT) sector and assesses whether servant leadership is still radical enough for the twenty first century. The study is designed to enhance the understanding of servant leadership and its relevance given the worldwide turbulence that came with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Leadership is deemed to be one of the most studied and most observed topics in academic literature but is still regarded as the least understood phenomena on earth (Burns 1995; Dhiman 2017; Vasudeva and Apparaju 2020). Leadership that serves others, invests in people's development, and fulfils a shared vision is desperately needed in the world (Page and Wong 2000). Yukl (2010) cited in Kok and Van Den Heuvel (2019), defines leadership as “the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives” (Yukl 2010:26).

In the workplace leadership has traditionally been viewed as pyramidal in nature. In this pyramid, the leader sits at the top, while subordinates sit at the bottom. This visualization of leadership was based on the top-down, hierarchical perspective of leadership (Salam 2016). The top-down approach was most applicable during the First Industrial Revolution, as the system sought workers who could easily fulfil repetitive activities in the most cost-effective way (McGee-Cooper and Looper 2001).

Horsman (2001) noted that there is a crisis in leadership, not due to a shortage of leaders but rather due to a shortage of the kind of leadership that will thrive in the current organizational environment. Dirani et al. further noted that the government institutions, communities we live in, and organizations are in predicament mode and are seeking for direction from their leaders. “The challenge is that our worldviews of the order of things, what we thought we knew about the order of systems, is falling apart” (Dirani et al. 2020:380).

It was noted by Spears (2010) that many businesses are moving away from the traditional autocratic and hierarchical leadership models toward an approach centred on relationships. According to Eva, Robin et al. (2019), a servant leader engages followers on a variety of levels through a holistic approach to leadership (e.g., relational, ethical, emotional, spiritual), such that they are empowered to grow into the best version of themselves.

At the beginning of 2020, COVID-19 affected all aspects of everyday life. The pandemic has caused and is still causing a worldwide turbulence in all parts of life, threatening the economy. It continues to challenge the well-established, entrenched leadership models (Nicola et al. 2020).

In light of these changes, leaders' responses to the pandemics are essential. “The greatest danger in times of turbulence is not the turbulence. It is to act with yesterday’s logic” (Kok and Van den Heuvel 2019:61). Leadership characterized by agility is the antidote to turbulence. Among its characteristics are flexibility, creativity, a cooperative approach to decision-making, and trustworthiness (Johansen 2012) cited in Kok and Van Den Heuvel (2019).

One of the largest firms in South Africa, Momentum Corporate, conducted a leadership, financial adviser and employee survey in June 2021. The objective of this quantitative research was to explore the co-creation of a company culture particularly during a crisis like Covid-19. Some of the key findings were the following:

- Employees have faced many emotional, psychological, economic, financial and health challenges during the COVID-19 crisis;
- Part of cultivating an enabling culture is being a caring, empathetic and compassionate leader in times of crisis.
- Leaders recognized that extending trust and confidence to employees was of critical importance during this time of uncertainty (Momentum 2021).

Given the uncertainties and complexities that accompanied the pandemic, is servant leadership capable of delivering a leadership approach that can meet the challenges of the modern workplace?

1.2 Background

In 1977 Robert Greenleaf introduced the concept of servant leadership. According to Greenleaf (1977) servant-leaders are driven to serve first, rather than to lead first, always striving to meet the highest priority needs of others. Greenleaf identified the principal motive of the traditional leader as being the desire to lead followers to achieve organizational objectives. He has been quoted as saying, “Good leaders must first become good servants” and “Leadership must first and foremost meet the needs of others” (Thompson 2010: 103).

Servant leaders are “those who place the needs of their subordinates before their own needs”. (Liden, Wayne et al. 2008:163). Following a systematic literature review of 39 empirical studies, Parris and Peachey concluded that “servant leadership is a viable leadership theory that helps organizations and improves the well-being of followers” (2013:377). Further support for servant leadership as the best option comes from Blanchard and Broadwell (2018) and Emanuel (2018), who pointed out the negative impact that self-serving leaders with inflated egos have in all segments. In their views this type of leadership results in fragmented organizations.

Lolita (2008) cited in Vasudeva and Apparaju (2020), stated that, to ensure that the “well-being of the employees across the organization is catered for, the leader should be empathetic, patient, an active listener, path provider and above all a steward for his / her followers; thus, providing a way for the inception of servant leadership” (Freeman 2004:13).

This study will focus on the Integrated Servant Leadership model developed by Gold and Walker (2020). The model comprises the three dimensions that are found in most academic literature on servant leadership, namely:

- Servant leadership orientation,
- Emotional intelligence, and
- Leadership competence.

A dimension is defined by traits and demonstrated by behaviours (“authentic core attributes”) that affect followers (individuals and teams), organizations, and communities. It is important to remember that all these interactions take place within the cultural context of the organization (Mouw 2011). Effective servant leaders must guide and enable others to live and work within the boundaries, roles, and expectations of their respective cultural contexts. Table 1 below presents the Servant Leadership Index (SLI) as an operationalization of measurement:

Table 1: Authentic core servant leadership attributes and behaviours.

Source: Gold and Walker 2020:6

Authentic Core Attribute	Servant Leadership Behaviors
Servant Leadership Orientation	
Commitment to serve	Decision to serve, Service Tenure
Concern for others	Altruism, puts people first (i.e., meets others' priority needs), is empathetic, volunteers
Humane	Humility, gratitude, forgives, patience, compassion, justice, trusts self and others
Moral seeker	Honesty, integrity, fairness, ethical behaviour, accepts feedback (i.e., listens to learn), renews him or herself, reflective, internal locus of control
Spiritual faith or life Philosophy	Shows a belief in a higher power and/or cause or philosophy greater than oneself
Respects diversity	Respects those who are dissimilar
Emotional Intelligence	
Self-Awareness	Aware of feelings, attitudes, and emotions
Self-Management	Expresses feelings, attitudes, and emotions constructively
Social Awareness	Aware of and honors the feelings, attitudes, and emotions of those about him or her
Relationship Management	Constructively manages his or her relationships
Leadership Competence	
Cultural competence	Competently negotiates cultures and spheres.
Empowering	Models enabling behaviour and attitudes. Teaches, mentors.
Foresight	Vision, risk taking or pioneering, aware and realistic, generates ideas, initiates action.
Responsible stewardship	Wise use of human, animal, ecological and capital resources. Practices sustainability, ensures mutual accountability.
Knowledgeable (Cognitive)	Leadership, management, subject area, and technology competence, is comfortable with cognitive complexity.
Builder	Builds community (i.e., promotes the common good), mediates conflict, provides structure and processes, shares power, communicates

1.3 Problem Statement

On 11 March 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic (Samara, Abu-Nabah et al. 2022). A newly identified coronavirus, a severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) had caused a worldwide pandemic of respiratory illness (Flynn, Smith et al. 2022). Since the outbreak of COVID-19 in December 2019 in

Wuhan, China, life changed dramatically for many people in the world in a relatively short space of time. It has been predicted that this change is permanent (Acter, Uddin et al. 2020) . COVID-19 is regarded as one of the most transferrable and most dangerous pandemics (WHO 2020q).

By 2022 the COVID-19 pandemic had claimed over 5.6 million lives worldwide, but the numbers were still escalating at an alarming rate (Chen 2022). In order to curb the virus most countries adopted and accepted interventions like physical distancing and handwashing. Since early 2020, people have been staying indoors across the world to avoid contracting the virus or transmitting it to others, as urged by WHO, to stop the infection from spreading (Acter, Uddin et al. 2020).

Apart from the fact that the virus became a global health concern, it altered the ways in which business was conducted and the daily lifestyles of individuals worldwide. In addition, many people found that working remotely allowed them to be more productive than working in an office (Birkinshaw, Cohen, and Stach 2020). Thus, employees working from home have faced new challenges, but some see benefits in allowing workers to work from beyond office walls. Using today's technology, remote workers can communicate and collaborate almost as effectively as they would in person, without some of the bother and costs involved with being physically present (Le Phan 2021). A remote work environment can also benefit employers in terms of attracting and retaining talented workers, especially as the labour market becomes increasingly competitive (Lamb 2021).

In most organizations where remote working is new for management, this shift has resulted in a different dynamic. Wyld (2022) points out that no precedent or managerial guidebook existed for suddenly adopting new and effective management styles for the aftermath of COVID-19.

Studies conducted by McKinsey Global and McKinsey (<https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/the-future-of-work-after-covid-19>) forecasted that the world of work would undergo a significant shift toward hybrid work in the post-COVID-19 era. Global remote work will be one of the lasting impacts of the current situation that will be a critical part of the post-COVID world (Yoon 2020; Vyas 2022).

Another aspect that has attracted the researcher's attention is the role played by millennials in the workplace and their approach to leadership. According to (Chou 2012), the work attitudes, beliefs, and values of millennials shape their leadership style.

Galdames and Guihen (2022), in an analysis of 51 papers on the millennial generation, established that the millennials are characterized by the following characteristics:

- A preference for working collaboratively (n = 31; e.g., Stefanco 2017; Barbuto and Gottfredson 2016);
- Actively striving for a work-life balance (n = 22; e.g., Woods 2016; Hackel 2017);
- A values-oriented approach to work (n = 21; e.g., Sweet and Swayze 2017; Murphy 2011);
- A need for feedback from and open dialogue with superiors (n = 16; e.g., Vanmeter et al. 2013);
- The search for purposeful work in a diverse workplace (n = 12; e.g., Urick 2017; Gladis and Gladis 2015).

Millennials are sometimes called 'Generation Y', 'Generation Me', or 'Generation Net'. They are defined as the generation born between the end of the twentieth century and the start of the new millennium (Howe and Strauss 2000; Edge 2014).

What is evident in the literature is that this group of employees does not respond well to the command-and-control type of leadership, and it has always demanded adjustments in the way

that employees are managed, preferring a different leadership style than previous generations (Chou 2012; Galdames and Guihen 2022). According to (Fry 2018) cited in Galdames and Guihen (2022), the millennial generation represents the largest generational workforce in the United States as of 2019.

Sayyadi (2022), interviewed 48 consultants to gain insights on organizations post pandemic. Their research revealed the following findings:

- The Mediating Role of Culture: Post pandemic, the cultural aspect of trust is key, noting that leaders should develop trust-based relationships.
- The Mediating Role of Structure: Leaders achieve a higher degree of effectiveness in a decentralized structure (Jung et al. 2008).
- The Mediating Role of Strategy: Focusing on the post pandemic, consultants agreed that leaders apply an analysis strategy to provide new and innovative solutions for organizational problems.

Most studies suggest that the information technology (IT) sector has secured an important position in the 21st century and expanded its market share in the global economy (Fismer 2005) and the crisis may accelerate some workforce trends already underway, such as the adoption of automation and digitization as millions of employees had to be sent home with laptops and other digital technologies to use remotely (Lund, Cheng et al. 2020).

Based on the above, it is evident that a new style of leadership is required that will take into consideration the demands of the millennials and the challenges that came with the advent of COVID-19. The question is whether servant leadership will solve these challenges.

Lemoine and Blum (2021) summed up the concept of servant leadership as composed of influence behaviours, manifested humbly and ethically within relationships, oriented towards follower development, empowerment, and continuous and meaningful improvement for all

stakeholders. Some benefits of servant leadership cited by different authors include the following:

- The focus on relationship for servant leaders positively impact both employee satisfaction and output while creating an environment where employees are supported and participation is encouraged (Thompson 2002).
- A key distinguishing characteristic of servant leaders is their ability to create a sense of accountability within their followers, which often leads to followers going above and beyond their call of duty (Selladurai 2014).
- Melchar and Bosco (2010) examined whether a servant leader can create a culture that attracts and develops other servant leaders. The results of the study showed that servant leaders can promote high job satisfaction, team effectiveness, and corporate goals and objectives in for-profit, high demanding organizations (Selladurai 2014).
- Servant leadership will help educational leaders provide support and assistance to students, teachers, and their families by listening, trusting, empathizing, healing, and developing relationships (Spears 2004).
- Serving others through servant leadership is the best fit for establishing trust and meeting organization participants' needs (Page and Wong 2000).
- Servant leaders will improve performance in their organizations by engaging more employees, building communities at work, and helping employees to find meaning so that they will be intrinsically motivated and perform at high levels. Servant leaders will make sure their work environments encourage people to be more helpful and creative (Keith 2021).
- In a servant leadership structure, not only are the voices of the associates heard, but their ideas are communicated, disseminated, and implemented much more easily to those in positions of leadership (Rank and Contreras 2021).

- Servant leaders are always engaging with members of their teams to ensure they are working in positions that are the best possible fit for their overall strengths and weaknesses (Savel and Munro 2017).

1.4 Site Context

An overview of the IT company, which serves as the research context for this study is presented in this section. For the sake of confidentiality, the company will be referred to as Company A.

The study was conducted in Cape Town, part of the Western Cape Province in South Africa. There is no doubt that the South African information and communication technology (ICT) market is one of the largest in Africa. According to Statistics South Africa (www.statssa.gov.za), a significant portion of South Africa's GDP comes from the ICT and electronics sector.

According to Invest Cape Town, Cape Town is one of the most lucrative provinces in the country. The Western Cape boasts an abundance of natural resources as well as a very well established agricultural and tourism industry. Several international corporations have subsidiaries in South Africa, including IBM, Unisys, Microsoft, Intel, Systems Application Protocol (SAP), Dell, Novell, Compaq. In recent years, Cape Town has become known as Africa's Silicon Valley, as it is now home to tech giants such as Naspers, Takealot, Aerobotics, Clickatell, GetSmarter, Yoco, and Sweepsouth, as well as Amazon, which has set up a huge data centre in Africa.

Company A was established in South Africa and has been in existence for almost four decades. The organization is one of the largest ICT companies in the world by revenue, delivering services in over 13 countries. The organization provides infrastructure and security solutions to both private and public sector. Research participants came from different divisions of the

organization, including human resources, project management office, technical operations, sales and client delivery, finance, solutions architecture and bid office management. It has been noted by Sankaran et al. (2017) that as technology advances, IT personnel require leaders that will ensure that everyone contributes to the delivery of value to customers. To accomplish this, the IT organizations must possess the right dynamics, different from the traditional command-and-control approach.

Company A views investment in and building a leadership benchmark as essential to leadership development strategy. In addition to its values, the company has a culture of continuous learning which allows its staff to reach their full potential. The level of training offered to leaders varies from those who are taking on their first leadership position to those at the executive level.

Company A is also passionate about nurturing young talent, creating opportunities for growth, and shaping the future of young people. As part of its flagship initiative, there is a graduate programme, for which the students are recruited from universities to be part of the organization. Many of the millennials who participate in the graduate programme make up the community. As a generation, these millennials are known for their high level of self-esteem and their high expectations from their leaders, as well as their reluctance to give full effort to things not considered to be very meaningful to their careers (Schullery 2013).

1.4 Research Objectives

The objective of the study is to understand servant leadership by establishing what is known about it from the literature and gaining a better understanding of the qualities and behaviours of servant leaders by understanding their orientation. This research explores whether IT leaders' perspectives, practices, and values align with servant leadership, and determines the

enabling factors and challenges they face every day that hinder the application of this leadership style.

Gold and Walker (2020), making reference to Greenleaf, note that the true measure of a servant leader's effectiveness is to ensure that the highest priority needs of those they serve are met and that they grow as persons.

Arising from the research, another goal was to utilize the research results to see if they can be applied in the IT sector.

The research sought to achieve the following objectives:

- To investigate the participants' conceptualisations of servant leadership;
- To determine the perspectives of managers on the implementation of the principles, practices and values of servant leadership;
- To investigate ways in which the principles and values of servant leadership can be applied in the IT company;
- To determine the factors that enable servant leadership; and
- To determine challenges to the implementation of the principles of servant leadership

1.5 Rationale and Significance of the Study

According to Mukonoweshuro (2015), cited in Bak (2013), the rationale of a study details how the researcher developed an interest in a particular topic and why they believe their research is worth carrying out.

Muchiri (2011), cited in Taylor (2013), notes that servant leadership is very understudied and unexplored on the African continent. Kgatle (2018) calls for servant leadership as the style urgently required for the current state of political leadership in South Africa to make the government more trustworthy and accountable.

Having entered the workforce more than two decades ago, I have experienced diverse leaders in several sectors. Some were outstanding and possessed traits that made it easy for me to follow them willingly and were concerned about my development. On the other hand, there were those who were more fixated on getting the work done and reaching the target and, in the process, stepped on other's toes. Coming across servant leadership was an eye opener and I became increasingly persuaded that the constructs of servant leadership offer a great opportunity for leaders to be more impactful in today's business.

The calibre of leaders in an organization is an important factor in determining whether the organization will be successful or not. Most business organizations are increasingly seeking leadership that emphasizes ethics, the well-being of the team and a concern for community, rather than self-serving management who are concerned about their own enrichment (Van Dierendonck 2011).

While servant leadership has been extensively researched on other continents, very little is known about IT servant leadership, especially in South Africa. For this reason, the research will contribute new knowledge to the study of servant leadership in the IT sector and its progressiveness in this current age. The results of this research will contribute to my ability to improve leadership competence in my organization and bring servant leadership to the market as a consulting service.

1.8 Limitations of this Study

According to Simon (2011) limitations are possible weaknesses in a research study and are out of the researcher's control. In contrast, delimitations are those attributes that limit the scope and define the boundaries of a study (Theofanidis and Fountouki 2018).

A cross-sectional study was conducted, restricted to one geographical area, Cape Town, and specifically focussed on line managers who agreed to participate voluntarily. This study was

limited by utilizing a convenience sample, which may not be representative of the general population. Furthermore, respondents did not indicate for how long they had been working as leaders or in their positions.

1.9 Structure of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters as follows:

- Chapter 1 provides a brief introduction to the study, detailed background about the site context, and the significance of the study, as well as its aims and objectives.
- Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive literature review on servant leadership theory and different leadership styles. Detailed information about servant leadership is also provided, including its history and background. Moreover, there is research evidence that servant leadership is effective and that there are some challenges that need to be overcome in the implementation of the concept.
- Chapter 3 sets out the research paradigms, methodologies, and designs used in this study, as well as the ethical imperatives that were observed in the study.
- Chapter 4 analyses the data collected through structured interviews and a questionnaire. The chapter presents the results of the questionnaires, along with key themes derived from the data.
- Chapter 5 discusses the results of the research, identifies research gaps and makes recommendations for further research.

1.10 Conclusion

Chapter one briefly introduced the research problem and the concept of servant leadership. This chapter also discussed the need to rethink leadership concepts in the context of 21st century dynamics at work, challenging the traditional leadership notions of heroic, hierarchical leaders who prioritise shareholder value, replacing it with one that focuses on stewardship and

collaboration through connecting and valuing others. Further, the chapter explains the fundamental objectives and the significance of conducting research within the Information Technology field. The next chapter presents an all-embracing analysis of scholarly material based on the servant leadership concept.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the literature pertinent to servant leadership and leadership theories similar to it will be examined. An analysis and assessment of leadership will first be conducted, as well as a comparison of servant leadership and other leadership theories. The chapter critically analyses the history of servant leadership, research conducted and models developed by various writers. Research evidence demonstrating servant leadership's effectiveness and efficiency is key to this chapter. In the process of critical review, it was vital to specify the context in which research on servant leadership was conducted, as well as to identify gaps in research that justified the project.

Ken Blanchard (n.d.), a scholar and thought leader in servant leadership stated,

I truly believe that Servant Leadership has never been more applicable to the world of leadership than it is today. Not only are people looking for a deeper purpose and meaning when they must meet the challenges of today's changing world, they are also looking for principles and philosophies that actually work. Servant Leadership works. Servant Leadership is about getting people to a higher level by leading people at a higher level.

(Ken Blanchard on servant leadership – LinkedIn Learning)

Research shows that several remarkable and world-class organizations like Southwest Airlines, Vanguard Investment Group, Hobby Lobby, ID Industries, Starbucks, Steak-n-Shake, Synovus, Chick-Fil-A, use servant leadership principles, and are indicating their success to such principles, beliefs, and practices (Selladurai 2014; Parris and Peachey 2013; Harwardt 2020). Servant leadership has been widely discussed and researched and has gained much attention and momentum since Greenleaf introduced it in the 1970s. Most studies indicate that there is a strong connection between servant leadership and effectiveness, productivity, morale, reduction in employee turnover and trust (Anderson 2009; Hamilton 2008; Babakus et al. 2011; Barbuto and Wheeler 2006).

2.2 Overview of Leadership Theory

This section will define and review the key leadership theories currently in practice. There are many definitions of leadership and a cross-section of these will be reviewed. According to Dhiman (2017), scholars are fascinated by the topic of leadership, probably because it is so closely tied to our self-image. Most people, especially those aspiring to advance in life, see themselves as leaders. (Laub, Laub et al. 2018) believe that a “leader is a person who sees a vision, takes action toward the vision, and mobilizes others to become partners in pursuing change” (2018:59). Laub et al. further explain the key dimensions of their definition as follows:

- Vision is “the capability to conceptualize a preferred future” . (Laub, Laub et al. 2018: 59). Winston and Patterson (2006) state that the leader should be able to convey a prophetic vision of the future in clear terms that resonate with the followers’ beliefs and values in such a way that the followers can understand and interpret the future into present-time action steps.
- Action is personal power applied to doing what needs to be done to move toward the vision, the preferred reality. Another key role of a leader is to guide the actions of one or more individuals toward the accomplishment of a mutual goal (Thompson 2010).
- Mobilization involves the influencing of people to voluntarily engage and move into the leadership process with you. Hackman and Johnson (2000) suggested that to be an effective leader one ought to be able to balance out many variables while mobilizing the organization’s resources in pursuit of a common objective.
- Change is an outcome achieved as a result of intentional action toward the preferred reality. Rost asserts that “change is the most distinguishing characteristic of leadership” (1993:115). Laub (2004) concurs and further notes that “Pursuing change is the action of leadership. Mobilized leaders and followers engage in this process to create change and therefore serve as change agents together. Change is always the intended outcome

of leadership. Leaders and followers may not get the change they desire, but the reason for entering this leadership partnership is to pursue change. The purpose of leadership is to move (to change) the world” (Laub 2004:6).

There are a number of leadership theories. Lussier and Achua (2015) cited in Elgenidi (2021) defined a leadership theory as a description of some traits and qualities of leadership. He suggested that theories are usually useful in understanding, predicting, and controlling successful leadership because they provide understanding, prediction, and control. The leadership theories reviewed focus firstly on the leader himself/herself and further explain the relationships that develop between the leader and followers. The theories are explained below, starting with the “great man” theory.

2.2.1 The great man theory

According to Elgenidi (2021), this theory is one of the earliest theories of leadership. Leadership characteristics are innate, according to this theory. In other words, this theory suggests that great leaders are born (Kibbe 2019; Uzohue, Yaya and Akintayo 2016). Fundamental to this theory is the idea that there are heritable traits that distinguish leaders from non-leaders (Day and Zaccaro 2007).

2.2.2 Transactional leadership theory

According to Khanijou (2020), Burns (1978) introduced this theory, but Bass (1985) made it popular. Essentially, transactional leadership involves an exchange of services between the leader and the follower (Bass and Avolio, 1990). The theory holds that providing financial and monetary incentives to employees motivates and fosters their performance.

2.2.3 Contingency theory of leadership

Within contingency theory, leadership styles are described as task-motivated or relationship motivated. Task-motivated leaders are concerned primarily with reaching a goal, whereas relationship-oriented leaders are concerned with developing lasting relationships with

individuals or organizations (Yun et al. 2006). Each leader's orientation is measured through Fiedler's "least preferred co-worker" (LPC) scale. Contingency theory uses an individual's orientation to predict the type of situation in which he or she will be an effective leader. Contingency theory suggests that leader-member relations, task structure, and position power characterize the various leadership situations (Waters 2013).

2.2.4 Trait theory

The trait theory of leadership implies that personality traits influence leader development and effectiveness. According to this theory, the person holding the position is more critical than the situation (Northouse 2012; Stanley 2017). Despite the fact that the trait theory depends on the characteristics of leaders, it also suggests that these characteristics can be developed (Northouse 2012).

2.2.5 Path-goal theory

This theory is based on the premise that, "people are satisfied with their job if they think it leads to things that are highly valued, and they work hard if they believe that effort leads to things that are highly valued" (House and Mitchell 1975:1). The path-goal theory suggests that if the leader's behaviour is appropriate and satisfying to subordinates, the subordinates see such behaviour as either an immediate source of satisfaction or as instrumental to future satisfaction. The second proposition of this theory is that the leader's behaviour will be motivational. In path-goal theory, leadership focuses on motivating followers to improve their performance (Jermier 1996).

2.2.6 Situational leadership theory

"It is not enough to describe your leadership style or indicate your intentions. A situational leader assesses the performance of others and takes the responsibility for making things happen" (Schermerhorn 1997:5).

A situational leadership model was developed by Hersey and Blanchard (1976) after extensive research and is seen to be beneficial to managers in diagnosing the demands of their situation (Schermerhorn 1997). Based on this theory, leaders are expected to adapt their style of leadership to the maturity or readiness of the followers as well as the nature of the task (Stanley 2017). Table 2 below, adopted from (Elgenidi 2021), shows the maturity levels and the leadership style required for each one of them.

Table 2: Levels of maturity and leadership style.
Source: Elgenidi 2021:27

Maturity level	Most appropriate leadership style
M1: Low Maturity	S1: Telling/Directing
M2: Medium Maturity and limited skills	S2: Selling/ Coaching
M3: Medium Maturity, high skills but lacking confidence.	S3: Participating/ Supporting
M4: High Maturity	S4: Delegating

Schermerhorn (1997) noted the following about the styles:

- *High-task/low-relationship leader behaviour (S1)* is referred to as “telling” and is characterized by one-way communication in which the leader defines the roles of followers and tells them what, how, when, and where to do various tasks.
- *High-task/high-relationship leader behaviour (S2)* is referred to as “selling”. In this situation most of the direction is still provided by the leader. However, the leader

attempts – through two-way communication – to get the followers to psychologically adopt decisions that have to be made.

- *High-relationship/low-task leader behaviour (S3)* is called “participating”. In this situation the followers have the ability and knowledge to do the tasks, there is two-way communication and shared decision-making between the leader and followers, and the leader plays a more facilitating role.
- *Low-relationship/low-task leader behaviour (S4)* is labelled “delegating”. The followers have the ability and are ready to take on responsibility, and the leader lets the followers control their own work or projects.

2.3 Servant Leadership Compared with Other Theories

Van Dierendonck (2011) identified seven leadership theories that overlap most with servant leadership, namely, transformational leadership, authentic leadership, ethical leadership, level 5 leadership, empowering leadership, spiritual leadership, and self-sacrificing leadership.

2.3.1 Servant leadership vs transformational leadership

Transformational leadership is defined by Bass (1990b) cited in Stone, Russell et al. (2004) as leaders broadening and elevating the interests of their employees, generating awareness and acceptance of the purposes and mission of the group, and stirring their employees to look beyond individual self-interest for the good of the group.

According to Selladurai, transformational leaders should act upon their subordinates in four distinct ways, namely, “idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration” (2014:np).

Below are some of the differences between servant leadership and transformational leadership:

- A transformational leader is motivated by a mission to reinvent the organization in order to survive in the external environment. Although individual growth is important, it must

be considered in relation to the success of the organization in the external environment (Smith, Montagno and Kuzmenko 2004) cited in Peterson, Galvin et al. (2012). By contrast, servant leadership places the psychological needs of followers above organizational goals (Eva, Robin et al. 2019)

- A servant leader emphasizes humility, authenticity, and interpersonal acceptance, while none of these are explicitly embodied in transformational leadership (Van Dierendonck 2011).
- Transformational leaders see the personal development of followers in the context of what is best for the organization while servant leaders see the followers as the primary focus (Graham 1991).
- Leaders who practice servant leadership create conditions that allow followers to take responsibility for their own well-being and build shared visions. They trust followers to do what is best for the organization (Stone, Russell et al. 2004).
- It has been shown that transformational leadership can lead to narcissism, a phenomenon caused by a narrow focus on short-term profit maximization that ultimately has disastrous long-term effects (Selladurai 2014).
- Transformational leaders strive to improve organizational performance. The followers are therefore a means to an end. Conversely, servant leaders aim to develop their followers multi-dimensionally. The followers are therefore an end in themselves (Eva, Robin et al. 2019).
- In contrast to transformational leaders, servant leaders are more likely to place followers first, organizations second, and themselves third (Eva, Robin et al. 2019).
- Servant leadership remains distinct from transformational leadership in that “Servant leaders are sensitive to the needs of numerous stakeholders, including the larger society,

and servant leadership encourages followers to engage in moral reasoning” (Liden et al. 2008:163; Peterson, Galvin et al. 2012).

- In the collaborative process, servant leadership seeks to strengthen and develop people's potential by encouraging and affirming them. Serving as a servant leader emphasizes listening without judgment and willingness to learn from others, which are not attributes of transformational leadership. In contrast, transformational leadership is less concerned about behaviours related to emotional value and less concerned with learning from others, although it still encourages innovation and creativity (Selladurai 2014).

2.3.2 Servant leadership vs authentic leadership

According to Van Dierendonck (2011) an authentic leader encourages followers to be authentic by fostering greater self-awareness, building relationships, internalizing transparency, internalizing moral perspective, and working on balanced processing. Ownership of one's experiences is stressed, regardless of whether they are feelings, thoughts, needs, wants, preferences, or beliefs. Leadership that is authentic implies that leaders are true to themselves and place others first (Dhiman 2017).

Differences between servant leadership and authentic leadership:

- Since authentic leadership has explicit theoretical roots in authenticity theory, authentic leadership is more about authenticity than anything else and characterized by a willingness to learn; standing aside and giving way to others is not characteristic of authenticity (Van Dierendonck 2011).
- As with authentic leadership, servant leadership emphasizes the importance of being genuine and true in one's interactions with others. Servant leaders, however, tend to function with deep self-awareness and self-regulation as a result of a spiritual or altruistic motive to serve others, both of which are absent in authentic leadership practices (Eva, Robin et al. 2019). Servant leaders do not strive to be authentic merely

for the sake of authenticity but rather are driven by a sense of higher calling or by their inner conviction to serve and make a difference in the lives of others (Dhiman 2017).

2.3.3 Servant leadership vs ethical leadership

Ethical leadership as defined by Brown, Trevino, and Harrison (2005) cited in Van Dierendonck is “the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement and decision-making” (2011:120). Van Dierendonck (2011) further states that ethical leadership emphasizes the importance of involving employees directly, building trust, and being ethical in every way. Below are the differences between these two types of leadership:

- Ethical leadership emphasises directive and normative behaviour, while servant leadership is more concerned with the followers' development (Van Dierendonck 2011).
- Ethical leadership tends to be more prescriptive and aligned with guidelines to be followed based on innate ethical rules, whereas servant leadership is more flexible and contingent, taking into account both the follower and the organizational context (Eva, Robin et al. 2019).
- Authenticity and guidance for followers are not part of the role of ethical leadership, but rather caring about people and being honest and trustworthy (Eva, Robin et al. 2019).

2.3.4 Servant leadership vs level 5 leadership

In his ground-breaking work on long-term corporations, Collins (2001) identified a leadership style called Level 5. Their characteristics of humility and direction make level 5 leaders similar to servant leaders. An organization's success is the focus of Level 5 leadership, not followers' development (despite being mentioned in the context of preparing the successor). Level 5

leadership appears to lack elements such as authenticity, interpersonal acceptance, and stewardship (Van Dierendonck 2011).

2.3.5 Servant leadership vs empowering leadership

The key to empowering leadership is to consider the perspective of employees and the leader's actions (Van Dierendonck 2011). Employees are actively encouraged to become self-directing and self-motivated by emphasizing employee self-influence processes (Pearce and Sims 2002). An important characteristic of servant leadership is that it empowers people and develops them, which is similar to the principle of empowering leadership in that it inspires and empowers employees to become intrinsically motivated by setting clear goals, requiring them to achieve them, and providing managers with the necessary knowledge and skills (Van Dierendonck 2011).

2.3.6 Servant leadership vs spiritual leadership

According to Fry and Slocum (2008) cited in Van Dierendonck (2011), creating a vision that evokes a sense of calling and creating a culture that motivates both followers and team members is the first step towards spiritual leadership. Fry's (2003) view is that, in spiritual leadership, one should lead by his or her concern for others (Dhiman 2017).

A major gap in our understanding of spiritual leadership has been the lack of empirical research on what constitutes spiritual leadership. The operationalization of spiritual leadership by Fry (2003) is more concerned with organization culture than actual leadership behaviour. Although there is some overlap in terms of experiencing life as a calling and feeling understood and appreciated, servant leadership theory seems to offer a more comprehensive explanation of the leader-follower relationship (Van Dierendonck 2011). A secular theory was also posited by Greenleaf to avoid the ambiguity and confusion associated with the term "spirituality" in the

work environment, which may mean different things to different people, according to Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003).

2.3.7 Servant leadership vs self-sacrificing leadership

Zhang and Ye define a self-sacrificing leader as one who “puts personal interests before the welfare of subordinates on motivation, is willing to endure the loss or the risk on behavior, it is not a formal order, but in the interaction subtle influence subordinates to make voluntary change attitude and behaviour on affecting mechanism” (2016:1206) The ideologies of servant and self-sacrificing leadership are similar in purpose, and both include altruistic elements. However, they differ on the means to achieve a desired outcome. Self-sacrificing leadership acts in the best interest of their members and organizations, while servant leadership offers a role model for discipline, commitment, and dedication, and provides effective follow-up on performance issues. Furthermore, servant leadership encourages internal motivation through providing resources to meet the needs of members in an organization, in order to inspire subordinates to act (Zhang and Ye 2016).

- In contrast to servant leadership, self-sacrificing leadership is primarily concerned with the organization and not the followers (Matteson and Irving 2005) cited in Van Dierendonck (2011).

(Dhiman 2017) summarises the theories that emphasize empathy and altruism.

Table 3 : Leadership theories emphasizing empathy and altruism.

Source: Dhiman 2017:52

Leadership Theory	Ways they incorporate empathy and altruism
Transformational Leadership	Burns argued transformational leaders empower, listen and help communities to become self-sustaining (p.37)
Servant Leadership	“Make sure that other people’s highest priority needs are being served” (Greenleaf 1997:7)
Authentic Leadership	“Service before self; mission and the organization supersede self-interest” (George 2003)
Social Exchange	“Understanding perspectives other than your own is a crucial component to participating in the community” (Komives and Wagner 2012:165)
Spiritual Leadership	Altruistic love is a sense of wholeness, harmony, and well-being produced through care, concern, and appreciation for both self and others (Fry 2003)

Table 4: Similarities between servant leadership and other theories

Source: Coetzer 2018:50

Leadership Theory	Similarities with Servant Leadership
Transactional Theory	Focuses on results
Transformational Leadership	Focuses on people and results Vision, developing followers, enhancing performance Value-based leadership theory
Authentic leadership	Authenticity, role modelling, compassion, integrity, self-awareness, self-regulation, humility
Level 5 leadership	Focuses first on people, second on strategy Humility, accountability, and willingness to learn
Situational Leadership	Recognises follower, leader, and situational relationships Provides direction and support
Spiritual leadership	Vision, forgiveness, humility, accountability, courage, integrity, love, and altruism Creates meaning, enhances purpose and cultivates intrinsic motivation
Charismatic leadership	Vision, role modelling, caring, and self-awareness Recognises follower, leader, and situational relationships
Leader-member exchange	Develops trustful relationships with followers

2.4 Origin and Definitions of Servant Leadership

The focus of this study is to determine whether servant leadership is radical enough for the 21st century. The first democratically elected president of South Africa, Nelson Mandela spent years in prison for his activism, but was eventually released, winning the Nobel Peace Prize for his activism and leadership. In response to a question about leadership he said, “Real leaders must be ready to sacrifice all for the freedom of their people” (Burford 2014:4, cited in Dhiman 2017).

According to Selladurai (2014), for years the emphasis on leadership has been on control, authority, supervision and overall management functions. In this top-down leadership model leaders are usually considered to be implementers of externally imposed reform efforts. Based on Taylor's (1911) scientific management theory, Fayol's (1916) administrative principles, and Weber's (1920) bureaucratic principles, this approach is centred around traditional management concepts.

Selladurai (2014) explains that the classical model of leadership describes the role of a leader as only fulfilling and implementing the solutions to problems created externally. Leadership is a hierarchical position governed by rigid rules. Consistency, efficiency, and standard guidelines were seen as benefits of this type of leadership in terms of decision making, activities, and processes, and was also deemed to provide order and control.

Businesses during the Second Industrial Revolution required employees who were able to carry out the most mundane tasks effectively. Given that, factories and the companies mostly implemented a top-down approach to leadership, in which the leaders made all the decisions and managed and controlled all the information (McGee-Cooper and Looper 2001).

Spears and Lawrence noted that in the twenty-first century the traditional type of leadership, which is more autocratic and hierarchical, is starting to make way for a new approach that is

“based on teamwork and community, one that seeks to involve others in decision making, one strongly based in ethical and caring behaviour, and one that is attempting to enhance the personal growth of workers while improving the caring and quality and quality of our many institutions” (2002:2).

2.5 Dimensions of Leadership in the Twenty-First Century

Khanijou (2020) mentions the following factors affecting the twenty first century leader:

- **Demographic and generational shifts:** Kok and Van Den Heuvel (2019) noted that in the workplace there are currently three conflicting generations, i.e. baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1964), Generation X (1965–1980), and millennials. There are differences in values and beliefs between these generations, and leaders need to realize that the incentives used to inspire one generation may no longer be applicable to the other generations, especially the younger generation. Rodriguez and Rodriguez (2015:856–857) cited in Kok and Van Den Heuvel (2019) provide a summary of the most important characteristics of millennials in order to help senior leaders understand and lead them
- **Technologically astute:** Millennials have mastered technology and use it to express their views. Owing to their technological mastery, high-tech equipment is considered a key component of what they consider an ideal work environment (Christensen 2017).
- **Informed:** Born in the information age, this generation makes use of social media to get a lot of information for personal and career-based information. Work that is meaningful and encourages learning and development is important to millennials (Müller 2013).

- **Diverse:** Millennials are open minded towards diversity and value teamwork in a collaborative, and more informal environment. There is high regard for personal relationships in both the private and professional spheres (Balda and Mora 2011).
- **Multitaskers:** A millennial is regarded as a multi-tasker, believing that they perform exceptionally well in this area.
- **Autonomous:** Millennials lack respect for hierarchy, especially if actions are poorly structured.
- **Customers and stakeholders have more options and choices** when it comes to getting the products and services they need from the organization. Therefore, organizational leaders must adopt leadership styles that bring out the best in their employees and subordinates in order to ensure that the organization's customers and stakeholders are provided with value and benefits (Khanijou 2020).
- **Social media influence and the advancement in technology:** Social media has a huge impact in understanding the customer needs. To be effective and remain competitive, leaders need to understand how the technology works and adopt it (Khanijou 2020).
- **The dimension of knowledge sharing and transfer:** Leaders have to understand the dynamics of technological and digital platforms available and how that influences their employees.
- **The work patterns and regulations are also changing:** In the wake of COVID-19, remote work grew exponentially. This was the first time many workers had ever worked in this manner, and by and large reacted favourably to it (Wyld 2022). Vyas (2022) also noted that it is anticipated that the world of work will undergo a significant shift toward hybrid work in the post-coronavirus disease world, making hybrid working to some extent the new normal at work. In essence, this new world of work requires leaders who

are able to connect, engage and trust their employees to work independently, despite not seeing them regularly.

- **The employees in pursuit of meaningful work:** Frémeaux and Pavageau (2022) conducted research to understand how leaders can contribute to their own meaningful work and to the meaningful work of their employees. The concept of meaningful work is defined as the correlation between the objectives a person expects to realize at work (expected job characteristics) and their perception of how effectively those objectives are realized in the real work context (perceived job characteristics). The results were aligned to the concept of servant leadership as follows:
 - **Employees’ learning and development opportunities:** Provide their employees with responsibilities and facilitate their professional development by ensuring their enjoyment at work” (Frémeaux and Pavageau 2022:59). Providing employees and colleagues with opportunities for professional and personal growth is a tremendous responsibility for the servant leader. Spears (2005), cited in Blanchard and Broadwell (2018).
 - **Employees’ autonomy:** By allowing their employees to exercise their judgment and influence in their work environment, the leaders give the employees enough freedom to organize their work in the most effective manner for them (Blanchard and Broadwell 2018). In addition to allowing employees autonomy in their daily activities, servant leaders seek out their people's input and feedback on a range of topics, such as team projects or organizational strategy (Blanchard and Broadwell 2018; Cai, Lysova et al. 2018).
 - **Employees’ work recognition:** “Acknowledging and valuing their team members' contributions; ensuring that the workload is adjusted according to their capacity and resources; and providing very concrete support for their

team.” (Gandolfi, Stone et al. 2017:59). In order to achieve this, a servant leader strives to create a real, supportive, yet highly challenging environment, where people feel that their hearts, minds, and souls are engaged every day (Gandolfi, Stone et al. 2017).

- **Employees are disengaged:** Gallup's most recent employee engagement survey statistics indicate that only 32% of Americans are engaged at work; and on a global scale only 13% of employees are engaged (Mann and Harter 2016). A leader's role is to engage followers and convert them from being mission neutral to being ambassadors for the organization who gladly give their time and talents to enhance its value (Stone 2015). The presentation of the follower's needs first is the most unselfish showing of leadership that leaders can exhibit, and leaders must act as catalysts in creating a workplace that is full of motivated employees (Gandolfi, Stone et al. 2017; Manby 2012).

The servant leadership approach has much to recommend, given the dimensions and issues of the twenty-first century, as this type of leadership, according to Wong, Davey et al. (2007), has the following characteristics:

- Leadership is characterized by humility and selflessness.
- Employee retention and development are top priorities for leaders.
- In order to foster innovation and enhance intrinsic motivation, these leaders create a safe and positive workplace.
- Leadership of this type respects and treats subordinates with dignity, thus humanizing the workplace.
- By placing the legitimate needs of their followers ahead of self-interest, leaders earn their followers' trust.

- This leadership is based on putting the needs of workers and society before profit margins.
- Listening openly to your employees is an important part of this type of leadership.
- By empathizing, being kind, healing, and possessing emotional intelligence, leaders can develop and maintain good relationships.
- These leaders value teamwork and involve others in decision-making so as to gain their support and cooperation.
- Human resource development and unleashing are key strategies for achieving organizational goals.

2.6 Servant leadership: History and Background

Although some suggest servant leadership is ageless, most research is focused on the work of Robert Greenleaf (Van Dierendonck and Patterson 2010). In 1964, Greenleaf retired as director of management research at AT&T after working there for 40 years. Greenleaf had a number of influences during his life but there were four that stood out for him, namely, his father, who set an example of servanthood; E.B. White, whose writings stressed seeing things holistically; AT&T's culture, which proved that employees' spirits could be nurtured while profits could be made; and nineteenth-century Danish Lutheran clergyman Nikolay Frederick Severin Grundtvig (Van Dierendonck and Patterson 2010).

Greenleaf openly asserted that he was inspired by the notion of the servant-leader, which he encountered in Herman Hesse's *Journey to the East*, in which a narrator goes on a pilgrimage. Among the group members is a servant named Leo, who looks after the group's well-being and does the daily chores. Leo disappears at some point, and the group is left in a chaotic state. A few years later, the narrator contacts the order that the group had belonged to again. Apparently, Leo had been and continued to be the spiritual leader and guide of the order. According to

Greenleaf, this story showed the possibility of combining servant and leader roles in one individual (Van Dierendonck and Patterson 2010).

It is not completely surprising that servant leadership has spiritual connotations, as some researchers have noted (Sendjaya and Sarros 2002). As he presented a new model of leadership for his new Kingdom, Jesus Christ confronted the reality of this choice (Laub 1999). As a servant to the people, Jesus saw himself as one of history's greatest leaders since he used his position to serve and not to be served.

Luke 22:26-27 states, “But among you it will be different. Those who are the greatest among you should take the lowest rank, and the leader should be like a servant. Who is more important, the one who sits at the table or the one who serves? The one who sits at the table, of course. But not here! For I am among you as one who serves.”

Over the course of 38 years, Robert Greenleaf worked for AT&T, eventually becoming its Vice-President for Management Research. Twenty-one years later, he founded The Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership, formerly the Center for Applied Ethics. In the years before he died in 1990, his second career was as a writer, speaker, and consultant for business, universities, and churches (Laub 1999).

In Robert Greenleaf’s words, cited in Fawell (2006):

The servant-leader is servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from the one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions. For such it will be a later choice to serve, after leadership is established. The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types and between them are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature. The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people’s highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons, becoming healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, not be further deprived? ...

The person who is servant-first is more likely to persevere and refine a particular hypothesis on what serves another's highest priority needs than is the person who is leader-first and who later serves out of promptings of conscience or in conformity with normative expectations. My hope for the future rests in part on my belief that among the legions of deprived and unsophisticated people are many true servants who will lead, and that most of them can learn to discriminate among those who presume to serve them and identify the true servants whom they will follow.

Greenleaf, 1977:13-14

Servant-leadership integrates the ideals of empowerment, total quality, team building, and participatory management, and the service ethic into a leadership philosophy (Wong, Hairon et al. 2019). This model, as articulated by the Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership, highlights "increased service to others; a holistic approach to work; promoting a sense of community; and the sharing of power in decision making" (1997:4).

A servant leader's primary motivation (what they do) and self-construction (who they are) distinguish them from others (Sendjaya and Sarros 2002). According to Greenleaf (1977), servant leadership is a life-long, inward journey (Parris and Peachey 2013). A servant-leader can also be defined as "a leader whose primary purpose for leading is to serve others by investing in their development and well-being for the benefit of accomplishing tasks and goals for the common good" (Wong, Davey et al. 2007; Wong, Hairon et al. 2019).

Greenleaf further indicated say that "the person who is servant-first is more likely to persevere and refine a particular hypothesis on what serves another's highest priority needs than is the person who is leader-first and who later serves out of promptings of conscience or in conformity with normative expectations" (1977:14). In his view, the servant leader must be fully aware of his or her own inner motivation rather than techniques or skills.

Rather than defining servant leadership, Greenleaf focused on what it does and how it affects others. As a result of servant leadership, he believed that "all men and women who are touched

by the effort grow taller, and become healthier, stronger, more autonomous, and more disposed to serve" (1977:47).

2.6.1 Servant leadership beyond Greenleaf

In the last four decades, the concept of servant leadership has gained increasing acceptance in leadership and organizational literature, and has evolved as a leadership construct (e.g., Collins 2001; Covey, 1994; Farling, Stone, and Winston 1999; Heifetz 1994; Russell and Stone 2002; Senge 1997; Spears 1994; Wheatley 1994; Spears 1995; Lab 1999; Russel and Stone 2002; Patterson 2003; Ehrhart 2004; Barbuto and Wheeler 2006; Liden, Wayne, Zhao and Henderson 2008; Van Dierendonck and Nuijten 2011; Gold and Walker 2020).

In addition to researchers, several prominent business management writers have endorsed servant leadership, including Peter Drucker, Peter Block, Sheila Murray Bethel, Jim Kouzes, Barry Posner, James Autry, Warren Bennis, John Maxwell, Ken Blanchard, Max DePree, Bill Pollard, John Bogle, John Carver, Joe Batten and Dennis Romig (Wong, Davey et al. 2007)

As servant leadership developed since Robert Greenleaf's 1977 introduction, some changes were made, allowing it to develop characteristics which Robert Greenleaf had not initially included (Rachmawati and Lantu 2014). These include the functional attributes of vision, honesty, integrity, pioneering, empowerment, trust, service, modelling and appreciation of others, as well as the accompanying attributes of communication, credibility, competence, stewardship, visibility, influence, persuasion, listening, encouragement and teaching and delegation.

2.6.2 Primary characteristics of servant leadership

According to Taylor (2013), Spears (1995) was an important contributor to the development of servant leadership dimensions. According to Spears (1995) a servant-leader possesses the following ten characteristics: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion,

conceptualisation, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community.

Listening

The ability to communicate and make decisions has traditionally been valued in leaders. In addition to these skills, servant-leaders should listen intently to others to reinforce them. Identifying a group's will and helping to clarify is the responsibility of the servant leader. A receptive listener is one who listens attentively (including to what is *not* said). Also, listening involves understanding what one's body, spirit, and mind are communicating and getting in touch with one's own inner voice. A servant-leader's growth depends on regular reflection and listening. (Spears 2005)

Coetzer, Bussin et al. (2017) agree with Spears and describe leaders as those who listen actively and respectfully, asking questions to create understanding, providing time for reflection and silence, and paying attention to what goes unsaid. Henman (2009) points out that direct reports identify not listening as the primary weakness in their leaders.

Black, Morrison and Gregersen (1999), cited in Selladurai (2014), warn that cultural and language barriers can severely interfere with leaders' ability to listen effectively and point out that great effort and patience is required to truly get to know and understand people.

Empathy

Greenleaf (1977) quoted in Spears (1998), states that individuals thrive when their leaders show empathy and accept them for who they are even while their work and capabilities may be critically judged. Empathetic and tolerant leaders are more likely to be trusted. "The most successful servant-leaders are those who have become skilled empathetic listeners" (Spears 1998:13). Spears and Lawrence (2004:13) further noted that the servant never rejects, but always accepts and empathizes with others. Coetzer, Bussin et al. use the concept "compassion" meaning having empathy, describing it as "caring for others, being kind,

forgiving others for mistakes, accepting and appreciating others for who they are and showing unconditional *agapao* love towards others” (2017:6). The literature also references "value people, serve others, put others first, and be good to others" as additional keywords for describing compassion (Coetzer, Bussin et al. 2017).

Emotional Healing

Coetzer, Bussin et al. relate this characteristic to compassion. They further define this as “helping others recover from hardships or difficulties, having a concern for the professional healthcare of others, being sensitive towards others, assisting in healing relationships, and healing oneself and others to become whole” (2017:6).

Selladurai (2014) cites Greenleaf asserting that, “Whether professional or amateur, the motive for the healing is the same: for one's own healing” (Greenleaf 2002:50). Among the great benefits of servant leadership, Spears and Lawrence (2004) suggest, is the ability to heal both oneself and others when serving others.

Awareness

Cross-cultural workplaces require leaders to be acutely aware of their own identities and values and of how they relate to those who are culturally different (Selladurai 2014). Greenleaf (2002) noted that awareness does not bring solace. On the contrary, it disturbs and awakens. Capable leaders are usually intensely awake and fairly disturbed. They do not seek to be consoled but have their own, inner peace. (Greenleaf 2002).

We cannot achieve anything meaningful without reflection and by ignoring lessons and creating more unintended consequences. Slowing down and taking time to reflect will improve awareness (Wheatley 2005). Wheatley (2005) expresses amazement at how little time humans take to reflect on their actions. Awareness is also essential for understanding ethical and value-related issues. It enables one to look at most situations in a more integrated and holistic way (Spears and Lawrence 2004).

Persuasion

According to Greenleaf, being persuaded means having intuitively reached a sense of “rightness” about a belief or action. Seeking consensus is a method of using persuasion in a group (Frick and Spears 1996). In order to gain conformity in decision making, servant leaders usually use persuasion instead of formal authority or positional power (Spears 2010). As opposed to the traditional authoritarian model of leadership, in which the leader imposes his or her decisions on others, such an approach builds consensus within groups (Spears 2010).

Conceptualisation

Frick and Spears, cited in Selladurai (2014), asserted that Greenleaf regarded the leader’s conceptual capacity as the ability to display a vision. It is therefore imperative that servant leaders develop the ability to “dream great dreams” (Spears 2004:14.). The focus of staff members should be operational, while boards and trustees should be more strategically focused, and conceptually orientated (Spears and Lawrence 2004). In other words, leaders should expand their thinking beyond short-term operational objectives to encompass comprehensive conceptual goals in addition to short-term ones (Spears 2010).

Foresight

Foresight is described as the ability to understand lessons from the past, the realities of the present, and the likely consequences of a decision for the future (Spears and Lawrence 2004). Selladurai (2014) notes that this has implications for intercultural leaders especially when making decisions in multicultural settings, since leaders are able to analyse the past and present and thus anticipate the consequences of their actions, which increases the possibility of success.

Stewardship

Stewardship means to hold something in trust to serve others’ needs (Spears 1995, cited in Rachmawati and Lantu 2014). The servant leader’s role encompasses being the steward for financial, human and natural resources (Barbuto and Wheeler 2006). In the view of Van

Dierendonck and Patterson (2010) stewardship refers to the willingness to be responsible for larger institutions and to choose service over control and self-interest.

Commitment to the growth of people

Greenleaf's (1977) definition of servant leadership emphasizes the growth of those being served, ensuring their personal growth, improved health, and increased wisdom, freedom and autonomy, as well as increasing the likelihood that they themselves will become servants? (Spears 2000). Servant-leaders should be aware of their immense responsibility to nurture the personal, professional and spiritual growth of employees. (Spears and Lawrence 2004).

Building community

Rachmawati and Lantu (2014) define this trait as the realization that local communities are essential in a person's life. Greenleaf (2002) asserted that it is also difficult for the young to learn trust, respect, and ethical behaviour without community, and it is difficult for the old to maintain these in the absence of community. Spears (2005) argues that, as large organizations are no longer the prime shapers of human lives, servant leadership is a way of restoring communities by giving back to them and investing in them.

2.6.3 Attitudes for effective servant leadership

Dimensions of a Servant Leader

Harwardt (2020), cited in Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011), proposed the following eight dimensions of a servant leader:

- **Empowerment:** Servant leadership involves empowering people to do their work and evolve. Servant leaders believe that each and every person has value. Lemoine and Blum (2021) further assert that in addition to treating employees with dignity, servant leaders encourage them to buy into the organization's goals and mission through feedback, coaching, and encouraging them to never stop improving.

According to the research conducted by Coetzer, Bussin et al. (2017), empowerment is defined by researchers as a commitment to:

- Developing others to prosper personally, professionally, and spiritually;
 - Having a transformational influence on followers;
 - Transferring responsibility and authority to followers;
 - Providing clear directions and boundaries;
 - Aligning and activating individual talent;
 - Sharing information and encouraging independent problem solving;
 - Providing the necessary coaching, mentoring, and support according to the need of an individual;
 - Creating an effective work environment;
 - Building self-confidence, well-being, and proactive follower behaviour; and
 - Helping followers mature emotionally, intellectually, and ethically.
- **Accountability** means adopting practices that ensure transparency, holding others accountable, setting well-defined expectations according to an individual's capabilities, and performance monitoring. (Coetzer, Bussin et al. 2017). Followers need to know what is expected of them and the servant leader must allow them to be accountable for their actions.
 - **Standing back:** Servant leadership means standing back, prioritizing the followers' interests and granting them the necessary support as well as the appreciation they deserve.
 - **Humility:** Van Dierendonck and Patterson (2010), cited in Mukonoweshuro (2015), define humility as the ability to put one's own accomplishment and talents in proper perspective. A servant leader is aware of his or her own limitations and weaknesses.

- **Authenticity** means that the servant leader always and consistently expresses his or her thoughts and feelings (Harwardt 2020).
- **Courage:** Coetzer, Bussin et al. (2017) define courage as the willingness to take calculated risks, stand up for what is morally right and conduct oneself ethically despite possible adversity. A servant leader has the capacity to take risks and find new solutions (Harwardt 2020).
- **Forgiveness:** Servant leaders are distinguished by their ability to forgive perceived mistakes, never to apply them to other situations, and to build an atmosphere of trust as a result (Harwardt 2020).
- **Stewardship:** Serving others and holding things in trust while focusing on serving, so that self-interest and control are diminished (Harwardt 2020; Spears 2005).

Ways to engage in servant leadership

Table 5 below outlines ways to engage in servant leadership, as adapted from Lemoine and Blum (2021).

Table 5: Ways to engage in servant leadership
Source: Lemoine and Blum 2021:404

Ways to engage in servant leadership	Employees	Communication: Avoid distractions (e.g., cell phones) and choose words carefully ("we" and "us," not "I" and "you") during interactions.	✓
		Employee development: Guide followers on career and human development. Know your followers and their needs and wants. Help them to realize and achieve goals. Provide skill training necessary for success on and off the job.	✓
	Customers	Empower employees: Give followers the freedom to solve meaningful problems.	✓
		Remind employees often through words and actions of the importance of creating value and positive experiences for customers.	✓
	Partners, vendors, and suppliers	Role model: Consistently model honest, fair, ethical interactions.	✓
		Perspective taking: See things from the other side so you are negotiating with rather than against suppliers.	✓
	Communities and society	Remind employees often of the value the company brings to the community through narratives, symbols, and actions that say, "We care about our community, and this is what we do about it all the time."	✓
		Support community organizations through sponsorships and through encouraging volunteerism as a team and individually.	✓
	Shareholders	Guide followers: Practice teaching and coaching to develop the employee holistically, both as a person and in their workplace performance.	✓
		Feedback: Provide high-quality positive and constructive feedback frequently and consistently.	✓

2.6.4 Servant leadership models

The concept of servant leadership is extremely diverse in that a number of researchers have attempted to conceptualize the concept in several studies. The idea of servant leadership can be described in various ways by people who have experienced it. Historically, servant leadership dates back as far as 600 B.C (Wong, Hairon et al. 2019). Table 6 below reflects the most frequently used models and the latest model developed by Gold and Walker (2020), referred to as the Integrated Servant Leadership Model.

Table 6: Frequently used models

Source: Mukonoweshuro 2015; Gold and Walker 2020

Spears (1995, 1998)		
Listening	Persuasion	Helping people grow
Empathy	Conceptualization	Community Building
Healing	Foresight	Stewardship
Awareness		
Laub (1999)		
Valuing people	Providing leadership	Displaying Authenticity
Building Community	Developing people	Sharing Leadership
Page and Wong (2000)		
Caring for Others	Developing Others	Empowering others
Goal setting	Humility	Integrity
Leading	Servanthood	Shared decision making
Team building	Visioning	
Russel (2001)		
Appreciating others	Credibility	Empowerment
Modelling	Pioneering	Service
Trust	Vision	
Russel and Stone (2002)		
Appreciation of others	Empowerment	Honesty
Integrity	Pioneering	Service
Trust	Vision	Modelling
Patterson (2003)		
Agapao	Altruism	Empowerment
Humility	Love	Service
Trust	Vision	
Barbuto and Wheeler (2006)		
Altruistic Calling	Emotional Healing	Persuasive Mapping
Wisdom	Organizational Stewardship	
Liden, Wayne, Zhao and Henderson (2008)		
Emotional healing	Helping subordinates grow and succeed	Putting subordinates first
Creating value for the community	Conceptual Skills	Behaving ethically
Empowering		
Sendjaya, Sarros and Santora (2008)		
Voluntary Subordination	Covenant relationship	Transcendental spirituality
Authentic Self	Responsible Morality	Transforming influence
Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011)		
Empowerment	Interpersonal Acceptance	Courage
Standing back	Accountability	Stewardship
Authenticity	Humility	
Gold and Walker (2020)		
Servant Leadership Orientation		
Commitment to serve	Concern for Others	Humane
Moral Seeker	Spiritual Faith or Life Philosophy	Respects Diversity
Emotional Intelligence		
Self-Awareness	Self-Management	Social Awareness
Relationship Management		
Leadership Competence		
Foresight	Cultural Competence	Empowering
Builder	Responsible Stewardship	Knowledgeable (Cognitive)

2.6.4.1 Spears (1995, 1998) model

Larry Spears presented ten characteristics of the servant leader in 1995 after carefully considering Greenleaf's original writings (Spears 1995). He is credited with translating Greenleaf's ideas into a model that characterizes servant leadership (Van Dierendonck 2011). In addition to being the most referenced author, he is considered to be the first to conceptualize the concept of “servant leadership”, describing characteristics of servant leaders (Parris and Peachey 2013). As a basis for further development, these characteristics have been cited.

According to this model, a servant leader has the following characteristics:

- **Listening:** Servant leaders stress the importance of communication and identify their followers' desires (Rachmawati and Lantu 2014). The ability to listen accompanied by periods of reflection is essential to growing as a servant leader.
- **Persuasion:** The servant leader in an organization tends to make decisions based on persuasion rather than from positional authority (Spears 2010).
- **Empathy:** Accepting others and accepting their actions is one of the responsibilities of a leader (Rachmawati and Lantu 2014). “The most successful servant leaders are those who become skilled empathetic listeners” (Spears 2010:27).
- **Healing:** Spears (2010) asserted that in order to transform and integrate, relationships must be healed and healing must be learned.
- **Awareness:** A servant leader can observe situations from a holistic, integrated perspective through self-awareness and dedication to self-awareness (Spears 2010).
- **Conceptualization:** Spears stated that “servant leaders seek to nurture their abilities to dream great dreams, and their ability to look at an organisational problem from a conceptualising perspective requires that they think beyond day-to-day realities” (2010:28).

- **Helping people grow:** A servant leader recognises “people’s intrinsic value beyond their tangible contributions as workers and commit themselves to the growth of each and every individual within their institutions” (Spears 2010:29).
- **Community building:** In Greenleaf’s view (2002) cited in Spears, “all that is needed to rebuild community as a viable life for large numbers of people is for enough servant leaders to show the way, not by mass movements, but by each servant leader demonstrating his [or her] own unlimited liability for a quite specific community-related group” (2010:29).
- **Stewardship:** As far as Greenleaf was concerned, stewardship existed in “all institutions in which CEOs, staffs, and trustees all played significant roles in holding their institutions in trust for the greater good of society” (Spears 2010:29),
- **Foresight:** Spears (2010) defines foresight as taking into account past lessons, present realities, and future outcomes when making decisions.

2.6.4.2 Laub (1999) model

Specifically, Laub's research aimed to define servant leadership, determine its characteristics, and assess the presence of these characteristics through a written instrument based on Spears’ (1995) characteristics (Laub 1999; Selladurai 2014).

Two Delphi rounds identified six categories of servant leadership characteristics, with two or three categories within each category (Laub 1999).

- **Values people:** Listens, believes in people, and puts others first.
- **Develops people:** Provides learning opportunities, modelling, and encouraging growth
- **Builds community:** Enhances relationships through collaboration in a community, and values individual differences.

- Displays authenticity: Has the abilities to open him- or herself to being known, to learn, and to maintain integrity.
- Provides leadership: Takes initiative, defines objectives, and envisions the future.
- Shares leadership through the sharing of power and the sharing of status

2.6.4.3 Page and Wong (2000) model

Page and Wong (2000) developed a model that is very similar to Laub's (1999). Four clusters were identified in this model, namely personalities, relations, tasks, and processes. Three characteristics are found in each cluster: courage, humility, and helpfulness under personality; care for others, empowerment, and development under relations; vision, expressing, and setting targets under tasks; and leadership processes includes exemplary behaviour, team building, and joint decision-making under leadership processes.

2.6.4.4 Russell (2001) model

A comprehensive literature review of leadership led Russell and Stone (2001) to identify 20 leadership attributes, which they separated into 9 *functional attributes* (presented in the literature more frequently than the accompanying ones) along with 11 *accompanying attributes* (the operative qualities, characteristics, and distinctive features observed through the actions of leaders). As a result of the integration of these attributes, Russell and Stone developed a model of servant leadership for future research and application (Parris and Peachey 2013).

2.6.4.5 Russel and Stone (2002) model

The servant-leadership characteristics are divided into nine functional characteristics and eleven additional characteristics according to Russell and Stone (2002). Among those functional characteristics are vision, honesty, integrity, trust, service, modelling, pioneering, appreciation of others, and empowerment.

2.6.4.6 Patterson (2003) model

In response to transformational leadership, Patterson (2003) proposed a paradigm shift leading to servant leadership (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1994), suggesting that transformational leadership is the alignment of the goals of followers with those of the organization as a whole, while servant leadership focuses on individual followers' objectives (Patterson 2003; Stone, Russell and Patterson 2004).

Patterson (2003) developed seven constructs of servant leadership which are:

- **Agapao:** Love in the social or moral sense;
- **Acting with humility:** The ability to keep one's accomplishments and talents in perspective;
- **Altruism:** Helping others selflessly just for sake of helping, which involves self-sacrifice, although there is no personal gain;
- **Vision:** Mode of seeing or conceiving or unusual discernment or foresight;
- **Trust:** Confidence or in reliance on other team members;
- **Service;**
- **Empowerment:** Entrusting powers to others involves effective listening, making people feel significant, putting emphasis on teamwork, valuing of love and humility.

Using Patterson's theory, Winston (2003) proposed that followers reciprocate servant leader's behaviour by developing *agapao* love, resulting in greater commitment to the leader, higher self-efficacy, higher intrinsic motivation, and ultimately greater levels of service to the leader.

2.6.4.7 Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) model

In a literature review, Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) identified the following five attributes of servant leadership:

- **Altruistic calling:** Putting the needs of followers before one's own. In addition to providing an open and caring environment conducive to growth and development, these leaders want to make a positive impact on their followers (Kohle Paul and Fitzpatrick 2015).
- **Emotional healing:** Servant leaders strive to assist their followers in recovering from hardships or trauma.
- **Persuasive mapping:** When servant leaders can persuade their followers to act rather than coercing them, they are being persuasive.
- **Wisdom:** Servant leaders display wisdom by paying attention to details and being aware of their surroundings (Barbuto and Wheeler 2006).
- **Organizational stewardship:** Effective servant leaders help followers to develop professionally, enhancing their holistic development and teaching them to value community improvement (Spears 2004).

2.6.4.8 Sendjaya et al (2008) model

According to Rachmawati and Lantu (2014), Sendjaya et al. (2008) and Liden, Wayne, Zhao and Henderson (2008) have developed six-dimension models encompassing:

- Emotional healing;
- Creating value for the community;
- Conceptual skills;
- Helping subordinates to grow and succeed;
- Putting subordinates first; and
- Behaving ethically.

2.6.4.9 Van Dierendonck and Patterson (2010)

Van Dierendonck and Patterson (2010) identified six key characteristics of servant leadership, namely:

- **Empowering and developing people:** Fostering proactive, self-confident attitude among followers and giving them a sense of personal power;
- **Humility:** The ability to put one's own accomplishment and talents in a proper perspective;
- **Authenticity:** Expressing oneself in ways that are consistent with inner thought and feeling;
- **Interpersonal acceptance:** The ability to understand and experience the feelings of others and where people are coming from;
- **Providing direction:** To make work dynamic and "tailor made" (based on follower's abilities, needs and input);
- **Stewardship:** A willingness to take responsibility for the larger institutions and to go for service instead of control and self-interest".

2.6.4.10 Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011)

According to Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011:1242), servant leadership consists of six factors:

- **Empowering and developing people;**
- **Humility:** The ability to put one's own accomplishments and talents into proper perspective;
- **Authenticity:** Expressing oneself in ways that reflect one's inner thoughts and feelings;
- **Interpersonal acceptance:** The ability to understand and experience the feelings of others and where others are coming from;

- **Providing direction or making work dynamic:** Designing work around followers' abilities, needs and input; and
- **Stewardship:** The willingness to accept and take responsibility for the larger institution and to emphasize service instead of control and self- interest.

2.6.4.12 Gold and Walker (2020)

Gold and Walker (2020) developed what is termed the “integrated servant leadership” model. This model is three-dimensional, with each dimension defined by traits (authentic core attributes) demonstrated by behaviours (servant leadership behaviours), which affect followers (individuals and teams), organizations, and communities. This interaction takes place within the organization's cultural context (Mouw 2011). The three dimensions are described below.

- **Servant leadership orientation**

Leaders who are servants demonstrate dedication to serving, show concern for others, live morally, respect diversity, strive for personal growth, and have a positive spiritual faith or life philosophy (Gold and Walker 2020).

- **Emotional intelligence**

An emotionally intelligent servant leader demonstrates personal competence (i.e., self-awareness and self-management) and social competence (i.e., social awareness and relationship management). (Bradberry and Greaves 2009).

- **Leadership competence**

Competencies include cultural awareness, vision, foresight, knowledge, the ability to empower colleagues and others, and the ability to build organizations and people and practice responsible stewardship (Gold and Walker 2020).

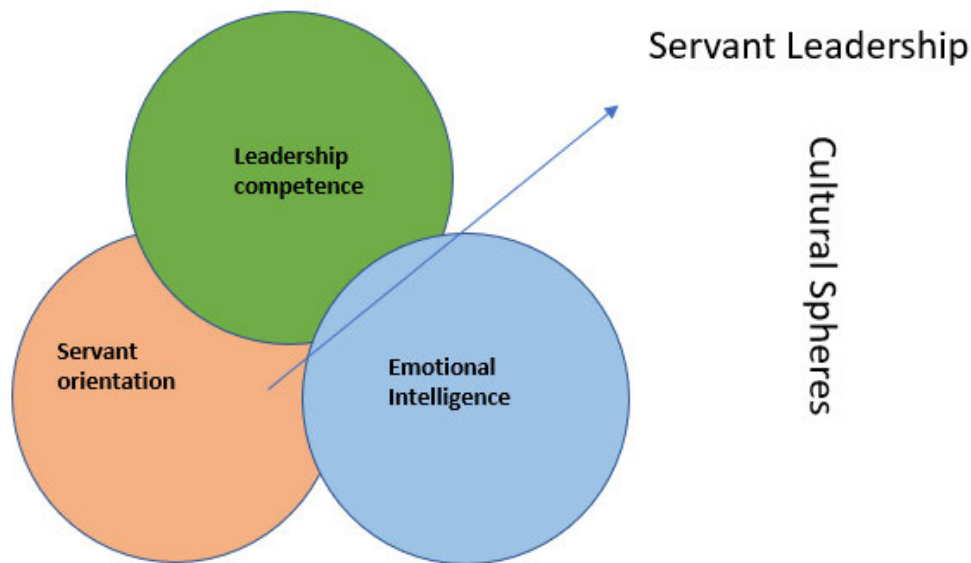


Figure 1: Servant Leadership Model.
Source: Gold and Walker 2020:6)

2.7 Conceptual Framework on Servant Leadership

The models discussed in the previous chapter may seem different , but they have a lot of similarities. Van Dierendonck (2011) developed the framework below based on extensive research outcomes and combining the different conceptual models. The six key characteristics of servant leadership provide an overview of servant leadership behaviour, since models and measures can sometimes use different vocabulary. Servant-leaders “empower and develop people; they show humility, are authentic, accept people for who they are, provide direction, and are stewards who work for the good of the whole” pg.1232.

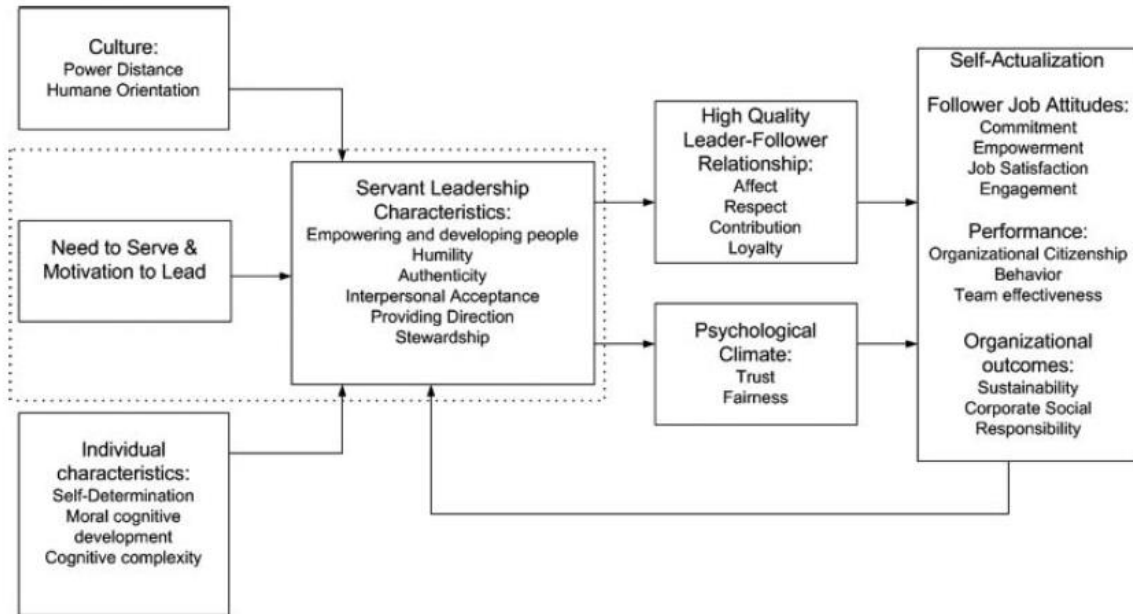


Figure 2: Conceptual framework on servant leadership

Source: Van Dierendonck 2011:1233

2.8 Measuring Servant Leadership

Based on peer-reviewed literature, the following six psychometric instruments have been developed to measure servant leadership:

1. The Organizational Leadership Assessment, created by Laub (1999).
2. The Servant Leadership Scale by Ehrhart (2004).
3. The Servant Leadership Questionnaire by Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) describes four types of validity (face, convergent, discriminant and predictive).
4. The Servant Leadership Scale by Liden, Wayne, Zhao and Henderson (2008) reports empirical data on face, convergent, and predictive validity.
5. The Servant Leadership Behaviour Scale by Sendjaya, Sarros and Santora (2008) identified face validity and content validity.
6. Van Dierendonck and Nuijten's (2011) Servant Leadership Survey provides convergent validity and acceptable reliability scores.

The latest instrument, the Servant Leadership Scale, was developed by Gold and Walker (2020) to measure a servant leader’s leadership orientation, emotional intelligence and leadership competence.

Table 7: Instruments to measure servant leadership

Source: Green, Rodriguez et al. 2016:79

Instrument	Author(s)
Organizational Leadership Assessment	Laub (1999)
Servant Leadership Scale	Ehrhart (2004)
Servant Leadership Questionnaire	Barbuto and Wheeler (2006)
Servant Leadership Scale	Liden, Wayne, Zhao and Henderson (2008)
Servant Leadership Behaviour Scale	Sendjaya, Sarros and Santora (2008)
Servant Leadership Survey	Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011)
Servant Leadership Scale	Gold and Walker (2020)

A comparison of different instruments is provided in Table 6 above. Many may find it difficult to decide which instrument to use to carry out a particular research project. Questions might arise, such as: Does one instrument perform better than the others? Does one instrument have a higher acceptance rate than another? Do some instruments have more stability or solidity than others? Are some of them more psychometrically sound than others? (Selladurai 2014).

Selladurai (2014) provides insight in terms of elements that any scholar can consider in choosing the right instrument. The older instruments, for example, have been used in more studies than the more recent ones because of their availability for a long time. For a researcher, this may be a valid criterion; the more a certain instrument has been used, the more accepted it will be within that particular field of literature, so it makes sense if the researcher wants to benefit from that specific field. However, even if newer instruments are not extensively used in literature, they are better psychometrically and build on previous instruments.

To conduct this study, the researcher used Gold and Walker's Servant Leadership Scale (Gold and Walker 2020) to assess the servant leadership understanding prior to the scheduled interviews. A detailed view of the methodology is provided in the next chapter.

Table 8: Servant leadership instruments.

Source: Van Dierendonck 2011:1240-1241; Gold and Walker 2020:6

	Laub (1999)	Ehrhart (2004)	Barbuto and Wheeler (2006)	Liden et al (2008)	Sendjaya, Sarros and Santora (2008)	Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011)	Gold and Walker 2020
Operational definition (Main sources)	Greenleaf (1977) Spears (1995)	Greenleaf (1977) Spears (1995, 1998)	Greenleaf (1977) Spears (1995)	Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) Page and Wong (2000) Spears and Lawrence (2002)	Greenleaf (1977) Patterson (2003) Russell and Stone (2002) Wong and Page (2003)	Greenleaf (1970) Laub (1999) Russell and Stone (2002) Patterson (2003) Sendjaya (2003) Spears (1995)	Russell and Stone (2002) Sendjaya and Sarros (2002) Van Dierendonck and Patterson (2015)
Characteristics of the instrument	One dimension 60 items	One dimension 14 items	Five dimensions: Altruistic calling Emotional healing Wisdom Persuasive mapping Organizational stewardship 23 items	Seven dimensions: Conceptual skills Empowerment Helping subordinates grow and succeed. Putting subordinates first Behaving ethically Emotional healing Creating value for the community 28 items	Six Categories: Voluntary subordination Authentic self Covenantal relationship Responsible morality Transcendental spirituality Transforming influence, comprising “mission” 35 items	Eight dimensions: Empowerment Accountability Standing back Humility Authenticity Courage Forgiveness Stewardship 30 items	Three dimensions: Servant leadership orientation Emotional intelligence Leadership competence 17 items
Methodology	Delphi group EFA	Literature review	Literature review Expert judges EFA CFA	Literature review EFA CFA	Literature review Expert judges	Literature review Expert judges EFA CFA Cross-cultural validity	Literature review
Reliability	.98	.98	.68-.89 (self-version) .82-.95 (rater version)	.86-.91	Not reported	.69-.91	Not reported

Discriminant and convergent validity	Not reported	Adequate content and discriminant validity found in the study	Adequate content, discriminant and predictive validity found in the study	Strong content, discriminant and predictive validity found in the study	Not reported	Strong content, discriminant and predictive validity reported. High stability through studies and good psychometric properties	Not reported
Development sample characteristics	828 respondents from 41 organizations (religious and secular, for- and non-for-profit, and public agencies)	254 employed university students	80 community leaders attending a leadership seminar 388 raters from counties in Mid-Western USA	298 students from a Midwestern university (EFA) 164 employees and 25 supervisors from a Midwestern company (CFA)	semi-structured interviews with senior executives at different organizations in Australia 277 graduate students at an Australian university 192 employees at two for-profit and two not-for-profit organizations in Australia	668 respondents from 4 samples (EFA) 263 civil servants from The Netherlands (CFA) 101 respondents from two samples from The Netherlands (CFA) 384 respondents from the UK	Not reported

2.9 Research Evidence on Servant Leadership

According to *Fortune* magazine's annual rankings of the best 100 corporations to work for, companies that practice servant leadership consistently rank within the top 10 (e.g., Southwest Airlines, Synovus Financial Corporation, TD Industries, and Container Stores) (Wong, Davey et al. 2007). A combination of philosophical, practical, and empirical evidence shows that servant leadership is both effective and desirable in a variety of organizational settings and contexts. Theoretical analysis, empirical research, and case studies, support the claim that servant leadership may indeed be the most effective leadership style (Wong, Davey et al. 2007).

This is because of the following:

- A Type S leader does not have to worry about egotistic concerns, such as insecurity and self-advancement, which allows them to focus on developing workers and building the company.
- Type S leaders have a positive view of workers as individuals who are capable of developing their full potentials and becoming leaders, if they are given a supportive and caring work environment. Workers who are given a supportive and caring work environment can develop their full potential and become leaders themselves
- The best employees are brought out by Type S leaders because they are sensitive to their individual needs and personality differences.
- Leaders of Type S are situational leaders who are able to take advantage of situations in which absence of power allows them to manage and make decisions for themselves.
- When faced with a variety of situations, Type S leaders will do whatever is necessary to maximize their effectiveness as leaders.
- Type S leaders develop the strengths of their employees to make them into future leaders through worker-centred, growth-oriented approaches.

- Corruption and abuse in power can be prevented by servant leadership.
- A servant leader can help a company build an emotionally healthy culture and reduce burnout.
- Leaders who engage in servant leadership cultivate intrinsic motivation among their people by inspiring them to believe in their own growth and embrace the organization's vision and purpose.
- Servant leadership seems to benefit most those who are cynical about authority and seek authenticity from their colleagues.
- People who value independence and creativity seem to respond best to servant leadership.
- The servant leader acknowledges that leadership is a group process, not a centralized one. The foundation of servant leadership is teamwork.
- The values of humane, spiritual, and ethical leadership are deeply rooted in all aspects of servant leadership.
- Human resource management and development are most effectively achieved through servant leadership.

2.9.1 Outcomes linked to servant leadership

Coetzer, Bussin et al. (2017) conducted research and their findings revealed three categories of outcomes linked to servant leadership, namely, individual outcomes, team outcomes and organizational outcomes. Each is discussed below.

2.9.1 Individual outcomes

- Organizational citizenship behaviour is enhanced when servant leadership is demonstrated (Coetzer, Bussin et al. 2017).

- There is a positive correlation between innovative behaviour and servant leadership and a serving culture, which, in turn, enhances creative behaviour (Coetzer, Bussin et al. 2017).
- There is a strong relationship between servant leadership and commitment to the organization.
- Servant leadership has a positive effect on employees' confidence and trust in their own abilities to carry out their duties (Walumbwa et al. 2010; Tang et al. 2016; Lemoine and Blum 2021).
- Similar to Greenleaf's assertions, previous studies have demonstrated that servant leaders cultivate an organization culture in which employees go the extra mile for customers (Liden et al. 2014).
- Establishing a positive work climate fosters a sense of belonging for followers (Neubert et al. 2008; Black 2010; Jaramillo et al. 2009a), which is associated with greater organizational commitment (Cerit 2010; Hamilton and Bean 2005; Hale and Fields 2007; Han et al. 2010; Pekerti and Sendjaya 2010).

2.9.2 Team outcomes

- Servant leadership enhances both individual and group/team citizenship behaviour, as well as group identification.
- Some evidence indicates that servant leadership improves organizational service culture, service climate, and procedural justice.
- A study examining the effects of leadership trust variables on team performance in 191 financial service teams with 999 participants, found that servant leadership contributed an additional 10% to team performance (Schaubroeck, Lam, Simon and Peng 2011).

- Researchers found that servant-led environments foster an affirmation of fair treatment, which is related to procedural justice, or how work groups perceive treatment (Parris and Peachey 2013).
- An organization's performance can be enhanced by developing a servant leadership culture (i.e., a climate of willingness) within its team members (Ebener and O'Connell 2010; Hu and Liden 2011; Walumbwa et al. 2010).
- Servant leadership can boost leaders' effectiveness and improve the effectiveness of their teams (Schaubroeck et al. 2011; Hu and Liden 2011; Parris and Peachey 2013).
- The servant leader creates a culture of trust, fairness, collaboration and helping, which leads to greater efficiency and effectiveness individually and organizationally (Parris and Peachey 2013).

2.9.3 Organizational outcomes

- Servant leadership is linked to customer value co-creation, customer trust in the firm, customer satisfaction, customer orientation, customer serving behaviour, and value-enhancing behaviour (Coetzer, Bussin et al. 2017).
- Servant leadership increases sales performance directly. Servant leadership improves customer orientation, resulting in higher outcomes (Schwepker and Schultz 2015).
- Additionally, servant leadership is positively correlated to a serving culture, which enhances performance of the organization (Coetzer, Bussin et al. 2017).
- An examination of whether a servant leader in business can develop a culture that attracts and develops other servant leaders was performed by Melchar and Bosco (2010). They found that servant leaders in for-profit, high-demand organizations can create servant leader cultures that promote team effectiveness, support high job satisfaction, and achieve corporate goals (Selladurai 2014).

- Serving clients in a way that meets their needs is the foundation of successful client relationships, and servant leaders are naturally inclined to listen first (Lemoine and Blum 2021). Servant-leaders, therefore, listen intently to what customers need, resulting in higher quality service (Jaramillo et al. 2009, Chen et al. 2015).
- A servant-leader acts ethically and morally with all stakeholders, even when it is not legally or ethically required or prescribed (Greenleaf 1977b; Lemoine et al. 2019). There is evidence that servant-leadership builds ethical work environments in the workplace (Burton et al. 2017), setting an example for employees on how to deal with business partners in an ethical manner (Mayer et al. 2012).
- The servant leader also fosters an environment that is open, collaborative, and creative by providing a supportive working environment (Chiniara and Bentein 2018; Schaubroeck et al. 2011).
- Several studies confirm that servant leadership affects how employees and others perceive a company's relationship with the community (Coetzer, Bussin et al. 2017).

Table 9 below shows the effects of servant leadership:

Table 9: Effects of leadership.

Source: Harwardt 2020:62

Effects of Servant Leadership

Effects of Servant Leadership	Sources
Servant Leadership takes leader and follower to a higher level of motivation and morality.	Andersen, 2009; Hamilton, 2008
Servant Leadership increases employee satisfaction and thus reduces employee turnover.	Babakus et al., 2011
Servant Leadership creates a healthier environment in the organization for the followers.	Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006
Servant Leadership allows strong and serving relationships between Servant Leader and followers, thus generating employee satisfaction, enhanced perception of the organization's efficiency and additional deployment of staff.	Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006
Trusting the Servant Leader and the servant-led organization creates an environment that can improve the cooperation in team.	Garber et al., 2009; Irving & Longbotham, 2007
The efficiency of employees and teams can be increased by Servant Leadership.	Irving & Longbotham, 2007; Mayer et al., 2008; McCuddy et al., 2008; Parris & Peachey, 2013; Taylor et al., 2007
Servant Leadership improves the individual performance of the employees.	Harwiki, 2013; Jaramillo et al., 2009; Liden et al., 2014
Servant Leadership can render organizations more productive and profitable.	Joseph and Winston, 2005; Melrose, 1998
Servant Leadership creates a positive working atmosphere, which is correlated with the commitment to the organization. This, in turn, has an impact on the employees' satisfaction.	Cerit, 2009; Cerit, 2010; Chung et al., 2010; Hale & Fields, 2007; Mayer et al., 2008; Neubert et al., 2008
The orientation towards growth and success of the employees is correlated positively to the commitment to the organization.	Liden et al., 2008
A servant-led environment generates the preconditions for justice and fair treatment, which are again linked positively to equality.	Chung et al., 2010; Ehrhart, 2004
Equality, rendered by Servant Leadership, promotes trust in the Servant Leader and the organization.	Joseph & Winston, 2005; Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002
A positive correlation exists between Servant Leadership and the efficiency of a leader.	Hale & fields, 2007; Hu & Bentler, 1998; Irving & Longbotham, 2007; Neubert et al., 2008
Servant Leadership promotes and enables a culture of helping.	Ehrhart, 2004; Garber et al., 2009; Hu and Liden, 2011; Walumbwa et al., 2010
The perception of Servant Leadership is positively correlated to the trust in leaders, in particular by the communicative and supportive style of the management.	Joseph and Winston, 2005
A positive correlation could be determined between Servant Leadership and helping as well as creative behavior, which is supported by the promotion of the employees.	Neubert et al., 2008
Servant Leadership has a positive effect on the performance of an organization.	Choudhary et al., 2013; Huang et al., 2016

2.10 Dark Side of Servant Leadership

A variety of criticisms have been levelled against servant leadership. While some claim that servant leadership is only effective in non-profit organizations, others claim it is inefficient and time-consuming (Selladurai 2014). The servant leadership model is criticized by many as being weak, unprofitable, unhelpful, and ineffective (Kiechel 1992; Giampetro-Meyer et al. 1998; Stramba 2003; Clawson 2003; Daft 2005; Foster 2000). These criticisms have been proven to be false. TDI and Southwest Airlines are two examples of for-profit organizations that have implemented servant leadership successfully and profitably, while producing strong financial results as well (Haller 2005; Laub 1999; Patterson 2003; Strickland 2005).

Servant leadership has been criticised as being an idealistic, unrealistic concept requiring too many unrealistic attributes (Athar, Gowreesunkar et al. 2021).

- Unrealistic concept: There are no practical ways to achieve the characteristics outlined in the vast literature (Hall and Fields 2007; Irving and McIntosh 2010).
- Idealistic concept: Johnson (2001) believes that servant leadership is idealistic and problematic in American culture, because leaders who are considered emotionally weak and manipulative will be taken advantage of by their followers (Selladurai 2014).
- Too many unrealistic attributes: According to Spears (2010), servant leadership encompasses several qualities, such as listening, conceptualisation, commitment to growth, awareness, foresight empathy, healing, persuasion and stewardship. It is quite impractical for an individual to possess all these qualities, especially to the degree that is required to demonstrate true servant leadership.
- Empirical measurement: Most of the debates and literature on servant leadership have been theoretical so it has been difficult to place it alongside leadership theories such as transformational leadership that have also been extensively researched (Minnis and Callahan 2010).
- Lack of a clear definition: Generally, servant leadership theory is thought of as a general attribute rather than a specific quality, and critics contend that management functions may be inadequately controlled, supervised, and authorized. (Van Dierendonck 2011)
- Gender: In its literature, the majority of terms used to describe servant leadership are in most cases masculine, even though it advocates a genderless approach to leadership (Eicher-Catt 2005).
- Association with religion: The majority of literature on servant leadership indicates that servant leadership is a product of Judeo-Christian thought. It is for this reason that some

people are said to be questioning Christianity indirectly as a religion when they have questioned the theory (Minnis and Callahan 2010).

- Paradox: To further complicate the problem of lack of a consensus definition, servant leadership consists of two contradictory words. The word servant means “to serve – some-one who does tasks meant to benefit another, who is usually higher in status or rank”. A leader, on the other hand, is someone who “directs and guides others towards a certain goal or vision”. Some theorists view servant leadership as a paradox in relation to leading by serving (Wong 2004; Rinehart 1998).
- Provision for resistance from followers: Additionally, the model is assumed to be accepted and embraced by followers. The model does not take into account follower resistance. It is unrealistic to expect that the good will of the leader can make the model succeed (Laub 1999). According to McCrimmon (2010), followers may see no reason to change their behaviour if they believe their leaders will always take care of their needs.
- Innate versus acquired attributes: There is no specification in the model as to whether inborn attributes or acquired attributes define servant leadership. It may come naturally to some people to demonstrate values such as humility, while it may not come naturally to others to show traits such as persuasion.
- It is impractical and unrealistic in situations such as the military and prisons: Critics point out that leaders in an organization are required to perform command-and-control functions in order to manage the organization, guide, and modify followers’ behaviour to meet the situation. As Whitstone (2002) points out, some critics think servant leadership promotes passive behaviour.
- It is too hypocritical – Despite their claims, many leaders behave more like dictators than servant leaders (Wong, Davey et al. 2007).

2.11 Gaps in Servant Leadership

There is a lack of research on servant leadership in South Africa's information technology sector. According to (Eva et al. 2019), a thorough and integrated analysis of the research on servant leadership is essential for the following reasons:

- There are inherent inconsistencies in the field.
- Despite a majority of servant leadership research being published in top-tier management journals (e.g., Chen et al. 2015; Liden, Wayne, Liao, and Meuser 2014; Neubert, Hunter, and Tolentino 2016), there are still gaps in other disciplines, such as nursing (Waterman 2011), tourism (Ling, Lin, and Wu 2016), and education (Cerit 2009).
- Despite decades of cross-disciplinary research on servant leadership, this research remains fragmented across disciplines and has not been integrated.
- There are 16 known measures of servant leadership, but most of them have not been reviewed.

Table 10: Suggestions for future research.

Source: Eva, Robin et al. 2018:128

Theory	Foci	Research question
Conservation of resources theory	Organizational	How does the organizational culture influence the display of servant leadership?
	Organizational	Does perceived organizational support create an environment for servant leadership to develop?
	Leader	Does displaying servant leadership lead to stress, burnout, and mental illness?
	Leader	Do supportive work practices protect against servant leaders' stress, burnout, and mental illness?
	Leader	How does the resource investment in employees protect against resource loss for the servant leader?
	Leader	Does sleep quality and quantity influence servant leadership behaviors?
	Leader	Does job stress and/or work-home conflict influence servant leadership behaviors?
	Follower	How does servant leadership increase information sharing among followers?
Situational strength theory	Follower	How does servant leadership reduce follower emotional exhaustion and burnout?
	Country	How does servant leadership's influence over helping behaviors differ in countries with individualistic versus collectivist values?
	Country	Is servant leadership as effective in countries with high power distance/masculinity?
	Organization	Does the organizational context moderate the relationship between servant leadership and organizational outcomes?
	Organization	Does servant leadership have a different level of success depending on the type of organization (i.e. bureaucratic, organic, mechanistic, entrepreneurial, non-for-profit, volunteer)?
	Team	How does team autonomy moderate the relationship between servant leadership and team outcomes?
Self-determination theory	Follower	How does task ambiguity, complexity, and design moderate the relationship between servant leadership and follower outcomes?
	Organizational	Do HR practices moderate the relationship between leader personality and servant leader behaviors?
	Organizational	Does the organizational structure moderate the relationship between leader personality and servant leader behaviors?
	Leader	Do high levels of prosocial motivation, service orientation, and compassion lead to servant leader behaviors?
	Leader	Does having access to mentors and training programs influence the development of servant leadership?
Servant leadership (general)	Leader	Does servant leadership have a trickle-down effect?
		Is servant leadership empirically distinct from ethical, authentic, and transformational leadership?
		Does servant leadership predict organizational, team, and follower outcomes above and beyond instrumental, authentic, ethical, transformational leadership?
		Are there different paths by which servant leadership predicts outcomes relative to ethical, authentic, and transformational leadership?
		Does servant leadership predict organizational, team, and follower outcomes above and beyond organizational culture and HR practices?
		Is there a relationship between the leader's age, gender, education, and tenure and servant leadership behaviors?
		How does the relationship between servant leadership and followers develop overtime? How servant leadership influences employees during significant organizational change?

2.11.1 Barriers to servant leadership

Wong and Page (2003) identified some of the barriers to servant leadership.

- **Authoritarian hierarchy versus servant leadership**

A hierarchical organization cannot support servant leadership. To accommodate servant leadership, organizational structures need to be transformed from hierarchical to horizontal and participatory.

- **Egotistic pride versus servant leadership**

In some countries, like the United States of America, it can be difficult to practice servant leadership due to a culture of individualism and competition that fosters egocentricity. Self-serving leaders are free to elevate themselves and expand their influence when there are no checks and balances. In hierarchical organizations, egotism manifests in the form of celebrity syndrome, pedestal syndrome and rankism.

- **Leader who lacks self-awareness**

Consequently, a leader without self-awareness is unaware of his or her own shortcomings and cannot recognize where they need to improve. The Dunning-Kruger effect refers to a difficulty in judging one's own skill set (Dunning 2017; Lopez 2017). According to the researchers who discovered this effect, people lacking knowledge and skill in a particular area suffer from a double curse: they make mistakes and choose poorly; and they are unable to detect errors due to those gaps in their understanding. According to literature, one way to deal with this problem is to ask others for feedback and listen to their advice. Ask "how might I surrender to the learning? How might I listen deeply enough—listening being the first characteristic of servant-leadership" (Ferch 2015:232).

- **Paternalistic/benevolent father-figure**

Despite having a broad understanding of the organization, this type of leader has a paternalistic/benevolent father-figure leadership style (Camm 2019). For Greenleaf, leadership was about what it did to those under its influence: "Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?" (1977:13-14). If you lead from a paternalistic perspective, you may fall short of Greenleaf's ideal of a servant (Laub 2005).

- **Authoritarian leader who tries to mask a control-centric approach**

Servant leadership relies heavily on reciprocal relationships between leaders and followers (Spears 2018). The organizational structure can be abused by someone with strong manipulation skills, but little empathy. A pseudo-servant-leader may use servant-leadership jargon and they may think they are charismatic and dynamic leaders; however, if their only goal is to promote themselves, and if the jargon they use does not provide clear direction, it is hard for followers to understand what is expected of them (Camm 2019).

- **Narcissist leadership**

The motivation to feel grandiose is defined by Masterson (1988) as a constant need for “supplies”, which he defines as activities and relationships that reinforce that feeling. Narcissists, therefore, are often restless individuals, often displaying workaholic tendencies in order to constantly reinforce the impression of grandeur and accomplishment (Camm 2019). As a result of the use of control and rule-breaking for the personal benefit of the leader, bad leaders also conform to narcissistic personality types (Higgs, 2009, p. 168).

2.12 Current Direction in Servant Leadership

There have been many value-based approaches to leadership over the years. Nevertheless, scholars of leadership have focused on two forms of value-based leadership, namely, servant leadership and transformative leadership, both of which emphasize followers' interests (Van Dierendonck 2011). Zehir et al. (2013) cited in Athal, Gowreensukar et al., noted that “in this competitive 21st century, institutions that will survive are those that are willing to embrace change and have servant leadership at the core of their organisational structure” ((2021:13).

As a result of globalization, the world is now one village. Cultures and norms influence one another across continents. As globalization continues to increase exponentially, organizational leaders will have to increasingly deal with culturally diverse environments, where universal truths about culture and leadership are relevant and applicable (Dickson, Den Hartog, and Mitchelson 2003; Rabotin,2008). In addition to exporting best practices, multinationals also gain insight from host communities (Van Dierendonck 2011). Throughout the world, human rights movements have shifted the focus to human needs. As a result of these factors, as well as the ever-growing power of unions, management and leadership styles based on prestige, command, and authority will cease to exist (Oğuz 2010).

Trompenaars and Voerman (2010) argue that servant leadership is a universal leadership model since it hinges on something common to all cultures — humanity. In spite of the organization's needs, servant leaders invest in the needs of their followers, encouraging, empowering, and supporting them. This produces servant leaders at all levels of the organization, leading to organizational success (Northouse 2013).

In terms of engagement of leaders and followers, servant leadership is increasingly being seen as the most interactive method of leadership. The emphasis is, therefore, placed on serving those who are tasked with achieving organizational goals in order to attain those organizational goals (Gandolfi and Stone 2018). Ehrhart (2004) suggests that the competitive future belongs to organizations and leaders who empower their employees to identify and resolve the organization's problems and servant leadership means empowering subordinates to become leaders in their units.

If servant leadership is embraced and lives up to its tenets, it will manifest in every aspect of society through many of the characteristics listed by Spears (2010). Consequently, there will be little or no miscommunications since everyone will listen and be heard. In this way, the community will become united, cohesive, and capable of tackling challenges together. The result will be a more empathetic society that is committed to improving the lives of all of its members (Athar, Gowreesunkar et al. (2021).

2.13 Conclusion

This chapter outlined how servant leadership theory developed, grew, and expanded. Furthermore, the chapter discussed how this theory differs from other leadership theories, what leaders with servant leadership qualities should do, and how this theory is supported by research. In order to highlight areas of research that need to be explored further, a critique of the construct has been attempted. In conducting a literature review, this study's methodology

and design were developed based on identifying conceptual, empirical, and methodological gaps.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided a comprehensive discussion about servant leadership theory that framed my qualitative research analysis. Throughout this study, methodologies, designs, and approaches were designed to answer the pertinent research question, “Is servant leadership radical enough for the 21st century?”

There must be a systematic (planned, ordered, and public) approach to research to find the most appropriate results (Mohajan 2018). A key objective of this chapter is to outline the research method employed. This research was conducted using a qualitative research methodology. Creswell, cited in Isaacs (2014) defines qualitative research as an inquiry process that examines a social or human issue from a variety of methodological perspectives. Analysing words, assessing informants' opinions, and conducting the study in a natural environment is how the researcher builds a complex, holistic picture.

In order to understand the progressiveness of servant leadership, deductive research has been performed utilizing preferred epistemologies. The chapter will cover the data generation methods and describe the population and the sampling and analysis methods used in the study. Ethical considerations will also be covered in this chapter.

3.2 Research Design and Paradigm

According to Brink and Wood (1998) quoted in Mapongwana a research design is intended to address a research question and establish a methodology for answering it and “is a blueprint for action” (2016:115). Depending on the type of data to be collected, the data collection method, its presentation and analysis, a research design is either qualitative or quantitative (Welman et al. 2006). The four elements of a research paradigm are **ontology, epistemology,**

methodology, and methods. These elements shape how a researcher creates knowledge (Mukonoweshuro 2015).

3.2.1 Ontology

Ontology is defined as “the study of being” (Crotty 1998:10). A researcher’s ontological assumptions relate to what constitutes reality and what they believe reality to be. As Snape and Spencer (2003) point out, we can also learn about the world from the study. A definition of ontology is given in the SAGE Online Dictionary of Social Research Methods (2006) quoted by Al-Saadi as “a concept concerned with the existence of, and relationship between, different aspects of society such as social actors, cultural norms and social structures... Ontological issues are concerned with questions pertaining to the kinds of things that exist within society” (2014:np). Likewise, Ormston et al. describes ontology as pertaining to “whether or not there is a social reality that exists independently from human conceptions and interpretations and, closely related to this, whether there is a shared social reality or only multiple, context-specific ones” (2014:4).

According to Sutrisna (2009) objectivism and constructivism are the two most popular ontological positions. In addition, he describes objectivism as an ontological position asserting that phenomena exist independently of their actors. A fundamental tenet of constructivism is that phenomena and their meanings are constantly being shaped by a variety of actors (not only through interaction, but also through revision). According to objectivists, reality exists for each and every one of us in a uniform manner, whereas constructivists believe that reality is constructed differently by each individual. Table 11 sets out in details the assumption associated with objectivism and constructivism.

Table 11: Ontological positions.

Source: Al-Saadi 2014:6

Ontological positions (nature of the world and existence)	
Position	Assumptions
Objectivism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reality exists independently of our beliefs or understanding. • Reality can be observed directly and accurately. • A clear distinction exists between our beliefs about the world and the way the world is. • Only material or physical world is considered “real”. • Social phenomena and their meanings cannot change. • Events have causes and are determined by other circumstances. • The causal links between events and their causes can eventually be uncovered by science. • Life is defined in “measurable” terms rather than inner experiences. • Notions of choice, freedom, individuality and moral responsibility are excluded.
Constructivism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External reality exists but is only known through human mind and socially constructed meanings. • There is no shared social reality, only a series of different individual constructions of it. • Reality is subjective. • There exist only estimated or approximate observations or views of reality. • Social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors. • Social phenomena and their meanings are produced through social interaction and are in a constant state of revision. • Life is defined in “estimated” terms based on inner experiences of humans where choice, freedom and individual responsibility are appreciated.

3.2.2 Epistemology

Epistemology is defined by Crotty (1998) cited in Al-Saadi (2014) as “the theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective and thereby in the methodology”, while Sekaran and Bougie describe it as a “Theory about the nature of knowledge or how we come to know” (2016:391). Cohen, Manion and Morrison further noted that the study of epistemology is about “dealing with the nature and forms of knowledge” (2007:71).

A common definition of epistemology is the assumption we make about what knowledge is or how it is possible to know about the world (Richards 2003). Epistemology is defined by Bryman as concerning “the question of what is (or should be) regarded as acceptable knowledge in a discipline” (2008:13).

Positivism and interpretivism are the two most commonly used epistemological positions. The positivist position favours the use of natural science methods to study reality and beyond; the “truth” is available for discovery (by researchers). The interpretivist position is one in which the objects of natural science are separated from the actors, who find their own “truths” in viewing the world (Al-Saadi 2014). Therefore, a positivist believes that the real world can be observed, studied, and even ‘modelled’, whereas an interpretivist believes the real world can only be understood.

Table 12 describes in detail the views with the assumption associated with positivism and interpretivism.

Table 12: Epistemological positions.

Source: Al-Saadi (2014:7)

EPISTEMOLOGICAL POSITIONS (nature of knowledge and how it is acquired)	
Position	Assumptions
Positivism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The world is independent of and unaffected by the researcher. • Facts and values are distinct. • Objective and value-free inquiry is possible. • Disputes are resolved through observations. • Methods of natural science are appropriate for the study of social phenomena. • Knowledge is produced through the senses based on careful observation. • Only phenomena (and hence knowledge) confirmed by the senses can be genuinely regarded as knowledge. • Knowledge is seen as hard, tangible and objective. • Knowledge is arrived at through gathering of facts. • The social world is approached through the explanation of human behaviour.
Interpretivism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The researcher and the social world impact on each other. • Facts and values are not distinct. • Objective and value-free inquiry is not possible since findings are inevitably influenced by the researchers' perspectives and values. • Methods of natural science are not appropriate for the study of social phenomena for the social world is not governed by law-like regularities but mediated through meaning and human agency. • Knowledge is produced by exploring and understanding the social world of the people being studied. • Knowledge is seen as personal, subjective and unique. • The researcher understands the social world using both his/her and the participant's understanding. • The social world is approached through the understanding of human behaviour.

3.3 Approach for This Study

Using a qualitative approach, the researcher addressed the following research questions: (a) where, (b) what, (c) how and (d) when (Miles and Huberman 1994; Basias and Pollalis 2018). In qualitative research, observations are more natural, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), since researchers are challenged to interpret their data and draw conclusions based on their observations.

According to Basias and Pollalis (2018), quantitative research involves systematic investigation of phenomena through statistics and mathematics, whereas qualitative research analyses experiences, behaviours, and interactions without relying on statistics and mathematics. A qualitative approach to research allows for more flexibility on the part of the researcher and flexibility on the part of the participants than a quantitative approach, since quantitative research is usually rigid because it involves questionnaires with specific, standardized questions. (Goertz and Mahoney 2012; Miles and Huberman 1994).

Table 13: Key features of qualitative research approaches

Source: Basias and Pollalis 2018:93

	Brief Description	Literature
EXAMINES	Phenomena	Singh (2006); Goertz and Mahoney (2012); Dawson (2002); Kumar, (2005).
INTERPRETATION	Qualitative research includes a sequence of interpretative techniques that seek to describe, decode and translate concepts and / or phenomena instead of capturing the frequency of certain phenomena in society.	Maanen (1983); Miles and Huberman (1994); Merriam (2009); Hennink et al. (2010).
USUALLY SELECTED WHEN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An interpretation is required • Research is needed in relative new research areas. • Answers are required for research questions related to "what", "how," "when," and "where". • There is uncertainty about the conceptions under consideration. 	Merriam (2009); Hennink et al. (2010).
GENERAL CONTEXT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Related to observation • Uses flexible questionnaires • Investigates phenomena • Uses methods such as interviews for in-depth research. 	Miles and Huberman (1994); Merriam (2009); Hennink et al. (2010); Kaplan and Maxwell (1994).
QUESTION FORM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Questions 	Goertz and Mahoney (2012); Kumar (2005).
DATA FORMAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually text or spoken words that changes into text. 	Miles and Huberman (1994); Newman (1998).
ADVANTAGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows to understand the nature and complexity of the phenomenon under consideration. • Facilitates research in new areas • Supports the examination of a phenomenon in its natural environment. • Supports in depth research 	Denzin and Lincoln (1994); Lincoln and Guba (1985); Benbasat et al

Some of the key differences between qualitative and quantitative research stated by Kielmann, Cataldo et al. (2012) are that:

Quantitative research

- Makes use of a large sample size;
- Each participant is selected at random;
- Is based on statistical analysis; and
- The purpose of the study is generalization and statistical comparison.

Qualitative research

- Samples are relatively small;
- Participants are selected based on purpose;
- Comprising (but not statistically) the broad types of informants relevant to the study;
- Choosing cases with a wealth of information.

3.4 Methodological Approaches in Qualitative research

Mohajan (2018) identified a number of methodological approaches in qualitative research, namely, case studies, ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory and action research.

3.4.1 Case studies

According to Sturman (1997), cited in Mohajan), “a case study is a general term for the exploration of an individual, group or phenomenon” (2018:11). The term “case study” usually refers to a study of one or a few cases (Sagadin 1991). Depending on the purpose and design of a study, case studies can be considered quantitative or qualitative research. Due to the requirement for analysing individuals or groups of individuals in detail, a case study can take a lot of time and can be quite costly (Mohajan 2018).

3.4.2 Ethnography

An ethnographic study involves participation and observation of small societies over time, as well as interpretation of the data collected. Case studies examine individuals, programmes, or events, whereas ethnographies examine entire groups sharing a culture (Mohajan 2018). According to Cameron (1990), quoted in Mohajan (2018), ethnography is “learning from people”. Leininger defines it as “the systematic process of observing, detailing, describing, documenting, and analysing the life ways or particular patterns of a culture (or subculture) in order to grasp the life ways or patterns of the people in their familiar environment” (1985:13).

3.4.3 Phenomenology

“Phenomenology attempts to understand how participants make sense of their experiences” (Mohajan 2018:8). Phenomenology is popular in many areas of psychology, as well as nursing. It gives an insider’s view by looking at subjective states (Hancock et al. 2009; Tuffour 2017).

3.4.4 Grounded theory

Grounded theory is defined as “the theory that was derived from data, systematically gathered, and analysed through the research process” (Strauss and Corbin 1990, cited in Mohajan (2018:9). It is an approach to developing a theory grounded on data rather than empirical testing, that is, data are collected and analysed, and then an appropriate theory is developed (Glaser and Strauss 1967). The idea was taken from symbolic interactionists, who believed that meaning could be constructed using signs, languages, and symbols. The main goal of this field is to generate theory from observations (Walia 2015).

3.4.5 Action research

The objective of action research is to integrate scientific knowledge with organizational knowledge in order to address real organizational problems in collaboration with system users (Coghlan 2011). There is no single academic discipline for it, but rather an approach to research that has developed through a range of fields over time (Mohajan 2018).

3.5 Research Strategy

Mukonoweshuro (2015) cites Bryman and Bell (2011) as saying that a research method is a way of collecting data using specific instruments, such as a self-completed questionnaire or a structured interview schedule, which are determined by the research design. In this research, the main method of data collection was interviews, and these are discussed in detail under research tools. Furthermore, a Google questionnaire was used as a secondary tool to ascertain the behaviours of the participants in relation to servant leadership.

3.5.1 Research tools

3.5.1.1 Questionnaires

According to Williams (2003) questionnaires are used in a wide variety of settings to gather information about opinions and behaviours of individuals. In this research the participants were invited to complete – before the interviews – a survey on Google based on the servant leadership scale developed by Gold, et al (2020). The study was not intended to be classified as a quantitative study, but the questionnaires were given to measure the participants opinions and behaviours towards servant leadership.

Questionnaires can be used in conjunction with structured interviews to gather information from respondents (Williams 2003). The research adopted a qualitative method of data collection through conducting interviews and focus group discussions, despite using a targeted and representative sample of questionnaires to gather data from the participants, to provide insight into the interviews and determining their servant leadership type based on the servant leadership scale proposed by Gold et al. (2020). The questionnaire was sent along with the interview invitation and was preceded by a sentence that ensured the target sample units filled it out beforehand, that read: *“Can you kindly take some time and complete the form below before the interview?”*

The table below depicts the questions that formed part of the google online survey that the participants completed before the interview.

Table 14: Servant leadership scale.
Source: Gold, et al 2020:7

Servant Leadership Scale					
Please read each statement carefully. Circle the number that represents your usual behavior for that statement. When you have responded to each behavior, total your score. The interpretation is provided.					
Behavior	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1. I chose to serve through leadership.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Concern for others motivates me.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I prefer to serve anonymously, unrecognized.	1	2	3	4	5
4. My leadership behavior is moral.	1	2	3	4	5
5. A leader, I embrace truth, & accept feedback.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I have faith or philosophy which guides me.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I respect diverse people & culture.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I am aware of my emotions.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I competently manage my emotions.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I am aware and respect the emotions of others.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I constructively manage my relationships.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I am effectively work within and with different cultures.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I empower peers and others around me.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I take reasonable risks to serve others	1	2	3	4	5
15. I am a responsible steward of that entrusted to me.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I competently meet my professional responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5
17. I build effective communities & teams to serve others.	1	2	3	4	5
Total Score					
Excellent Servant Leader: 77-85			Competent Servant Leader 60-67		
Proficient Servant Leader: 68-76			Aspiring Servant Leader: <59		

The servant leadership model is defined by Gold et al. (2020) as consisting of three dimensions, namely, servant leadership orientation, emotional intelligence, and leadership competence. This study by Gold et al. (2020) shows how each dimension is defined by traits (“authentic core attributes”), which manifest themselves through behaviours (“servant leadership behaviors”), which have an impact on followers (individuals and groups), organizations, and communities.

Table 15: Authentic core servant leadership attributes and behaviours

Source: Gold and Walker 2020:6

Authentic Core Attribute	Servant Leadership Behaviours
Servant Leadership Orientation	
Commitment to serve	Decision to serve, service tenure
Concern for others	Altruism, put people first (i.e., meet others' priority needs), empathetic, volunteer
Humane	Humility, gratitude, forgive, patience, compassion, justice, trust self and others
Moral seeker	Honesty, integrity, fairness, ethical behaviour, accept feedback (i.e., listen to learn), renew themselves, reflective, internal locus of control
Spiritual faith or life philosophy	Show a belief in a higher power and/or cause or philosophy greater than themselves.
Respect diversity	Respect those who are dissimilar
Emotional Intelligence	
Self-awareness	Are aware of feelings, attitudes, and emotions
Self-management	Express feelings, attitudes, and emotions constructively
Social awareness	Are aware of and honour the feelings, attitudes, and emotions of those about them
Relationship management	Constructively manage their relationships
Leadership Competence	
Cultural competence	Competently negotiate cultures and spheres
Empowering	Model enabling behaviour and attitudes, teach, mentor
Foresight	Vision, risk taking or pioneering, aware and realistic, generate ideas, initiate action
Responsible stewardship	Wise use of human, animal, ecological and capital resources, practice sustainability, ensure mutual accountability
Knowledgeable (cognitive)	Leadership, management, subject area, and technology competence, cognitive complexity comfort
Builder	Build community (i.e., promote the common good), mediate conflict, provide structure and processes, share power, communicates

3.5.1.2 Interviews

According to Isaacs (2014), interviews and focus groups are the most common methods of collecting qualitative research data. Interviews may be in-depth or semi-structured. He suggests utilizing a relaxed and conversational style of interviewing and conducting it in a secure environment so both interviewee and interviewer feel comfortable during the interview. All interviews were conducted virtually using Microsoft Teams due to the COVID-19 protocols that were in place during the data collection period.

MacDonald stated that interviewing “is a theoretical approach to data collection, an engaging form of inquiry, and an appropriate method for collecting data regarding human experiences” (2012:42). According to Reinhartz “interviewing offers researchers access to people’s ideas, thoughts, and memories in their own words, rather than the words of the researcher” (1992:19). Isaacs (2014) noted a number of advantages and limitations of interviews. Those relevant to this study are mentioned below.

Advantages

- The researcher gains a greater understanding of an individual's understandings and experiences than through a one-on-one conversation.
- Helps the researcher discover subjective interpretations and meanings of people's experiences.
- Private sharing of sensitive and personal information may be more comfortable for participants.

Limitations

- Consumes a lot of time and energy.
- Difficult to perform well. Interaction between interviewer and interviewee is largely determined by the interviewer's sensitivity, persistence, and interpersonal skills.

According to Kielmann, Cataldo et al. (2012), there are two main types of interviews, namely, unstructured and semi-structured interviews.

Semi-structured interviews

These interviews cover a range of specific topics and include open-ended and closed-ended questions. The interviewer uses a loosely structured topic guide for a semi-structured interview. There may be more structured questions in this guide than others, but in general, these are usually followed by less structured probes that generate more information. Interviewees are not given a questionnaire because they can respond to questions as they please. The guide does not

state the order in which the questions should be asked, and additional questions can be added to clarify particular points.

The researcher answered the research question by conducting semi-structured interviews with several nominated line managers. Each participant was interviewed only once, for 30 minutes to an hour. Interviews were conducted according to a semi-structured interview guide, approved by the supervisor beforehand. The following questions were included in the interviews:

- What are the participants' conceptualisation of servant leadership?
- What are the managers' perceptions on the implementation of the principles, practices and values of servant leadership?
- How can the principles and values of servant leadership be applied in the IT company?
- What are the enabling factors and challenges to the implementation of principles of servant leadership?

In order to have the interview data captured more effectively, the researcher recorded all the interviews using Microsoft Teams recording.

Unstructured interviews

There are no completely unstructured research methods (as there will always be a purpose to the research), but these interviews are closest to conversations in that the respondent is least constrained in what they say. It is likely that there will be one question at the start of the interview that you will ask about the things you would like to discuss. It is possible to take different themes from what the interviewee has said, and explore them on different tangents depending on what he or she has said (Kielmann, Cataldo et al. 2012). According to Jamshed (2014), in conducting long-term field work, unstructured interviews are generally

recommended because respondents can express themselves in their own way and at their own pace, while maintaining minimal control over their responses.

Interviewing method

The researcher adopted a qualitative research method to answer the research question by conducting interviews. Verbatim quotes illustrate the results of this study. The researcher formally addressed herself to the interviewees, explained the purpose of the research and went through all ethical considerations before obtaining verbal informed consent from the respondents. All participants agreed to the session being recorded.

To ensure validity, along with pretesting the interview questions, the questions were phrased so that respondents clearly understood what they were being asked. After the interview, the participants were thanked for their time and were asked if there was anything else they would like to add, giving them the chance to elaborate on issues they thought were relevant but were not able to raise during the interview.

3.6 Population and Sampling

A sample is a subset of the population that has been chosen for participation (Weiss and Weiss 2012). In a qualitative study, a sufficient sample size is one that can answer the research question (Isaacs 2014). The formula or criteria for calculating sample size in qualitative research is not set in stone. As a rule of thumb, some authors say 12-26 is a good number. If a researcher is not able to obtain any new information from an interview or focus group after a certain period of data collection, he or she may consider that the data has reached saturation (Isaacs 2014).

The sample of this study consisted of 18-line managers. This study was conducted among line managers in an Information Technology company in Cape Town in the Western Cape province of South Africa.

3.6.1 Identification of sample

When the researcher made contact with the company's HR business partner in Cape Town, she explained the study's context with the intention of requesting their approval and obtaining the names of the line managers in Cape Town who would be invited to participate in the study. After HR approved the gatekeeper letter, interviews were conducted.

3.6.2 Types of sampling

Isaacs (2014) noted that there are different terms used to describe different qualitative samples as follows:

- **Typical case sampling** – It is common for researchers to use cases that are typical of whatever phenomenon they are studying.
- **Extreme or deviant case sampling** – It is common for researchers to identify unusual instances of the phenomena they are studying, such as outstanding successes or failures, extremely poor people or the very, very rich.
- **Maximum variation sampling** – In conducting a research project, a researcher may pick examples that range from one extreme to another. If researchers find patterns which cross variations or determine what factors result in one case producing x and another producing y for similar conditions, they might be able to find patterns that cross variations.
- **Homogenous samples** - People or cases that are similar to each other are chosen. The goal is to make people feel comfortable in the focus group discussion, so it's often a good choice to choose a sample from a variety of people.

- **Snowball sampling** (respondent driven sampling) - An interviewer will select participants with certain characteristics who are willing to participate in the study and provide useful information about the topic (demonstrating that they meet the selection criteria), and then, after the interview, the participants will be asked to identify other individuals like themselves for the study, who will also be interviewed. The process is repeated until the researcher has interviewed enough people to reach saturation point.
- **Purposeful (or purposive) random sampling** - The samples are chosen with a purpose (intention) to represent certain characteristics. The cases are then chosen at random from that purposely chosen universe.

Marshall (1996) simplified this category even further by coming up with three categories based on the purposive random sampling method.

- **Convenience sampling:** This sampling strategy is the least rigorous because individuals are chosen based on accessibility (convenience).
- **Judgement sampling:** In order to answer the research questions, a framework of variables should be developed to guide study sample selection.
- **Theoretical sampling:** Based on emergent data, interpretations are developed and new samples are selected to examine and elaborate on them.

This study employed a purposive, convenience sampling technique. It is decided which members will be included in the sample based on some known characteristic (Sekaran and Bougie 2016). Thus, a sample of line managers located in Cape Town was purposively selected for the study and it was through this method that the objectives of the study were met.

3.7 Research Quality Control

In order to ensure a measurement instrument's integrity and quality, validity and reliability are essential (Mahojan 2017). Validity refers to the truthfulness of the findings, whereas reliability

refers to the stability of the findings (Altheide and Johnson 1994). In qualitative research, validity and reliability increase transparency and reduce chances for researcher bias (Singh 2014).

3.7.1 Credibility

When assessing the credibility of a research methodology, validity and reliability are commonly used as evaluation criteria (Sutrisna 2009). Research findings in qualitative research are typically supported by rigour, thoroughness, the appropriateness of the method used to approach the research question, representativeness, and the ability of the research subjects to confirm or disprove the researcher's interpretation of the findings (Miles and Huberman 1994). The triangulation of diverse data sources is not uncommon when demonstrating the quality of qualitative data. The idea behind triangulation is that one can be confident in a result when different methods or sources provide the same results (Sekaran and Bougie 2016).

3.7.2 Transferability (validity)

A research instrument's validity is determined by whether “it measures what it is intended to measure” (Robson 2011). “Validity indicates the extent to which observations accurately record the behaviour in which you are interested” (Sekaran and Bougie 2016). Validity in qualitative research is about trustworthiness, utility, and dependability (Zohrabi 2013). Research validity is determined by how closely the research process adheres to the requirements of scientific research methods and all kinds of studies have to comply with this requirement (Oliver 2010).

In order to improve validity, the researcher worked closely with the supervisor to do the following (Mohajan 2018):

- Clearly define and operationalize the researcher's objectives and goals;
- Align research goals and objectives with assessment measures;

- Review the assessment throughout the research process, unclear language or other difficulties;
- Assess the measure in comparison to other measures or other data that may be available; and
- Select heterogeneous groups for this study.

3.7.3 Dependability (reliability)

Twycross and Shields (2004) define reliability as the consistency of a researcher's approach across different projects. An assessment tool is considered reliable if its results are stable and consistent (free from errors). It proves that the observed score of a measure is representative of the actual score (Feldt and Brennan 1989).

When a measurement is reliable, it provides consistent results that are equal to one another (Blumberg et al. 2005). It determines how accurate, consistent, repeatable, and trustworthy a research project is (Chakrabarty 2013). "Threats to reliability may occur for lack of clear and standard instructions, not all alternatives are provided, the questions are not presented in the proper order, measurement instruments describe items ambiguously so that they are misinterpreted, the questionnaire is too long or hard to read, and the interview takes too long time" (Kerlinger 1964; Fink and Kosecoff 1985; Mohajan 2017:4).

In order to improve reliability of the instrument, Neuman, Leedy and Ormrod (2014), suggest that the instrument be administered consistently, and that instructions be clear and precise for all participants. The instrument should, therefore, be applied consistently from one situation to another. Under the conditions present in this study, the instrument can withstand the consistency issue.

3.8 Analysis Methods

Ormrod (2001) cited in Mohajan defines content analysis as “A detailed and systematic examination of the contents of a particular body of materials for the purpose of identifying patterns, themes, or biases.” (2018:15). Qualitative data analysis is described by (Du Plooy et al. 2014) as a process that is messy, ambiguous, and time-consuming. It involves identifying significant patterns, sorting out trivial facts, and communicating the essence of information found in the data.

Braun and Clarke (2006), cited in Kiger and Varpio, define thematic analysis as “a method for analysing qualitative data that entails searching across a data set to identify, analyse, and report repeated patterns. It is a method for describing data, but it also involves interpretation in the processes of selecting codes and constructing themes” (2020:2).

Analysing data thematically means identifying patterns in the data that are important or interesting and using them to address a research question or make some assertions. An effective thematic analysis goes beyond simply summarizing data; it interprets and makes sense of it (Maguire and Delahunt 2017).

As suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006), researchers use the six-phase guide for this type of analysis because it is considered a very useful framework.

- Step 1: Become familiar with the data:
 - Reading and rereading the transcripts is the first step in any qualitative analysis. During this stage, the researcher read and reread interview transcripts, listened to recordings, took notes, and wrote down early impressions to gain an understanding of the data.
- Step 2: Generate initial codes:

- We organize our data in this phase in order to make a meaningful and systematic analysis. In order to study the research question effectively, the researcher coded segments of data that were relevant to or captured something interesting. The researcher read through the data and assigned codes to chunks of data during this step.
- Step 3: Search for theme:
 - A theme is defined by its significance. A theme clearly emerged when we examined the codes in this case. After all the data had been coded, the researcher grouped them into tentative themes or categories.
- Step 4: Review themes:
 - The preliminary themes identified in Step 3 are examined, modified, and developed in this phase. In this case, presenting all the relevant data relating to each theme is helpful. The researcher reviewed the transcribed data to develop themes.
- Step 5: Define themes:
 - It is important to identify the crux of each theme at this stage (Braun and Clarke 2006). The data were reviewed at this stage, creating some sub-themes and categories.
- Step 6: Write-up:
 - By developing a logical explanation (or a theory) and linking it to existing literature, a hypothesis could be developed for the phenomenon under study. These categories or tentative themes were therefore renamed and redefined to reflect key components of the phenomenon under investigation. Chapter 4 covers these themes in more detail.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethics involves the appropriateness of a researcher's behaviours regarding the rights of the subjects or those affected by the research (Saunders et al 2000). Ngozwana (2018) notes that the term ethics refers to the pursuit of morally correct practices and the prevention of harm, whenever possible, during the research process

Kielmann, Cataldo et al. (2012) note that, in addition to thinking about ethics and logistics of data collection, the following questions should be asked:

- What methods will you use to gain access to the field and your respondents?
- How do you relate to your respondents and the data that you elicit from them? What ethical issues do you need to consider in relation to your conduct in the field?
- Describe your plan for storing and managing the data collected.

The ethical clearance for this research was granted by the University of KwaZulu-Natal, which laid out the ethical practices to be observed during data collection. Qualitative small scale studies follow ethical guidelines such as informed consent, withdrawal from the study, confidentiality and anonymity (Ngozwana 2018).

“Informed consent is when potential participants freely agree to be part of your project, with full understanding of the research activities and any risks or benefits attached to being part of it” (Kielmann, Cataldo et al. 2012). It is only when participants understand what you are telling them about the study and their involvement that they can give informed consent.

The researcher made sure that the participants filled out an informed consent form included in the email invitation requesting their participation in the study. The researcher made sure that all ethical principles were clarified prior to the interviews and that the participants were free to withdraw from the study if they so desired. Moreover, before conducting any interviews or

discussions, the researcher requested their permission for recording their voices, which was granted by all the participants.

Isaacs (2014) noted that the common person can benefit most from a research project if participants and communities receive proper feedback. With that in mind, the researcher made a commitment to the gatekeeper to provide feedback to participants after completion of the study.

3.10 Research Methods and Design Limitations

Hofstee (2009) is of the view that all research methods have limitations. Therefore, it is important to identify the most significant limitations that will affect the outcome of the study or the generalization of the results.

The following were the limitations of this study:

- Although eighteen respondents are sufficient to undertake a qualitative study, the research was limited to one region and IT industry. Consequently, the results are not applicable to other industries and cannot be generalized.
- The study included more men than women, mainly white, whose home language was either English or Afrikaans. Thus, people of other home languages and women are excluded from the results.
- Since participants did not disclose their years of experience in management, there is a possibility that the study did not capture a wide enough spectrum and variety of responses.
- Although the research was conducted in English, one of the participants answered in his mother tongue, Xhosa. The researcher had to translate what was said in Xhosa to English without losing the meaning.

3.11 Conclusion

A description of the research design and methodology used to answer the research question is presented in this chapter. In order to achieve this, a methodology that accommodated the researcher's philosophical stance was essential, specifically interpretivism. The purpose of this chapter was to explore how qualitative and quantitative research designs contribute to the creation of knowledge from an epistemological and ontological perspective.

The chapter outlined the implementation of a qualitative research design, including sampling, selecting data collection methods, assessing their reliability and validity, and interpreting research results. A discussion of the study's limitations and the ethical standards applied concludes the chapter. Study findings, analysis, and recommendations will be presented in the next two chapters.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This study's research design and methodology were outlined in the previous chapter. This chapter analyses the data that was generated from Company A through the online questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The findings are then presented and analysed through an examination of the research questions, literature review, and theoretical frameworks explored in Chapter 2. Below are the critical objectives and questions that the study sought to address.

- Objective 1: To investigate the participants' conceptualisation/s of *servant* leadership;
- Objective 2: To determine the perspectives of managers on the implementation of the principles, practices and values of servant leadership;
- Objective 3: To investigate ways in which the principles and values of *servant leadership can* be applied in the IT company; and
- Objective 4: To determine the enabling factors and challenges to the implementation of the principles of servant leadership.

Verbatim quotes have been included throughout the presentation and discussion of the data to allow the participants' voices to be heard. Based on the methodology outlined in the preceding chapter, relevant findings are analysed.

4.2 Response Rate

Twenty individuals were targeted for the face-to-face interviews, invitations were sent to twenty six participants and eighteen agreed to be interviewed representing 90% of the target which, according to Edwards and Holland (2013) is acceptable in a qualitative study.

As indicated in the previous chapter, prior to the interviews, participants were requested to complete the online questionnaire based on the servant leadership scale developed by Gold et al. (2020). Despite completing the questionnaire, one participant was unable to attend the

interview due to unforeseen circumstances. Eighteen participants who were also available for interviews were included in the survey findings.

4.3 Data Analysis

4.3.1 Questionnaire findings

As described in Chapter 3, participants were required to complete an online Google questionnaire prior to the interviews, to assess their behaviours and actions with regard to servant leadership. The researcher based this questionnaire on the Integrated Servant Leadership Model designed by Gold, et al (2020). Participants were given 17 questions and were required to select one option from five options presented as follows:

- 1 = Never
- 2 = Rarely
- 3 = Sometimes
- 4 = Often
- 5 = Always

Depending on their scores, participants were assigned to one of the following categories:

- Excellent servant leader – 77 to 85
- Proficient servant leader – 68 to 76
- Competent servant leader – 60 to 67

Aspiring servant leader – below 59

The table below provides a detailed view of the participants who were part of the study.

Table 13: Participants' servant leadership types.
Source: Developed by the researcher

Participant number	Role	Date scheduled	Time	Sex (M/F)	Race	Reporting lines	Servant Leadership Score	Servant Leadership Type
Participant 1	Principal Head: South West Geo	05/10/2021	16h00-16h30	M	White	53	77	Excellent
Participant 2	Senior Specialist: MS Client Delivery Management	20/09/2021	12h00-13h00	F	Coloured	23	70	Proficient
Participant 3	Sales Manager	28/09/2021	16h00-16h30	M	White	14	82	Excellent
Participant 4	MS Technical Operations Team Lead	21/09/2021	15h30-16h30	F	African	4	77	Excellent
Participant 5	Financial Controller	22/09/2021	12h30-13h00	M	Coloured	1	66	Competent
Participant 6	Senior Client Delivery Manager	28/09/2021	13h00-13h30	M	Coloured	6	78	Excellent
Participant 7	Project Management Lead	15/09/2021	16h00-17h00	M	White	7	76	Proficient
Participant 8	Senior Manager: Client Services	17/09/2021	15h00-15h45	M	White	11	77	Excellent
Participant 9	Head of Client Delivery	29/09/2021	16h00-16h30	M	White	109	73	Proficient
Participant 10	Senior HR Business Partner	14/09/2021	15h00-16h00	F	White	6	72	Proficient
Participant 11	Bid Office Manager	05/10/2021	12h30-13h00	F	White	2	63	Competent
Participant 12	Senior Field Network Installation Team Lead	20/09/2021	17h30-18h00	M	African	5	71	Proficient
Participant 13	Senior Service Delivery Management Manager	30/09/2021	13h30-14h00	F	White	4	78	Excellent
Participant 14	Senior Security Operations Manager	30/09/2021	15h30-16h00	M	White	52	71	Proficient
Participant 15	Senior GTM Practice Solutions Manager	23/09/2021	16h00-17h00	M	African	7	80	Excellent
Participant 16	MS Operations Manager	28/09/2021	12h300-13h00	M	Coloured	1	73	Proficient
Participant 17	MS Operations Manager	01/10/2021	14h00-15h00	F	White	2	53	Aspiring
Participant 18	MS Operations Manager	07/10/2021	11h00-11h30	F	White	9	80	Excellent

Below is a graph depicting the results of the online questionnaire for the participants. According to the results, the majority of participants (eight) were excellent servant leaders, seven were proficient servant leaders, two were competent servant leaders, and only 1 was an aspiring servant leader. Most participants surpassed the 60 point score in the servant leadership model, indicating that they embrace the dimensions described in the model.

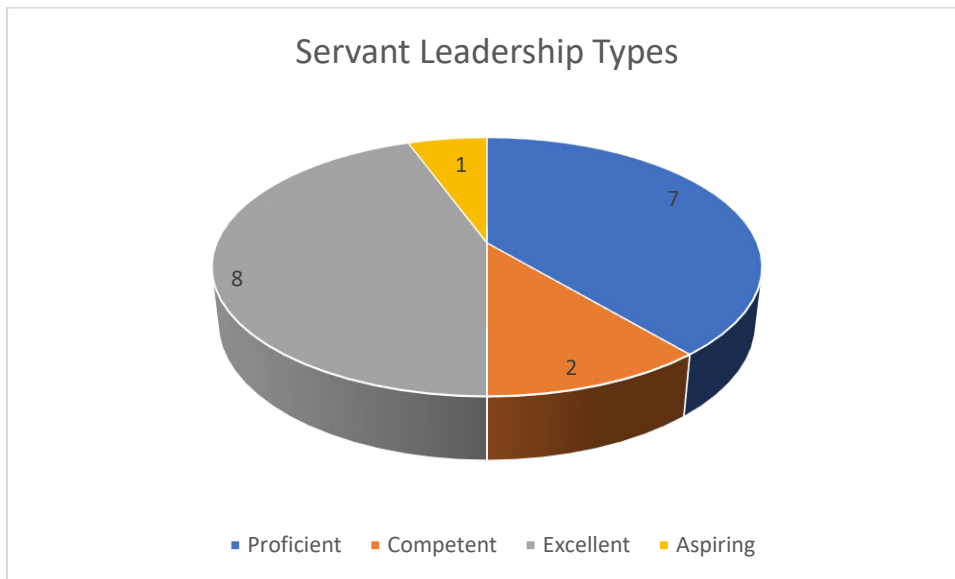


Figure 3: Servant leader types.
Source: Researcher's data

Detailed analysis of the table:

- **Males vs females**

Over 60% of participants in the table above are males, which reflects the ratio of male to female line managers within the organization. It has often been noted that women have been under-represented in leadership positions around the world, in a situation sometimes referred to as a glass ceiling, which they are capable of seeing through but cannot pass through unless they break it (Weiss 1999). As per Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) (<https://www.statssa.gov.za>), there are more men in employment than women, and the unemployment rate for men is lower than for women.

Although some researchers attribute servant leadership to women since women emphasize human dimensions of thinking, the study suggests that men can integrate positive feminine behaviours without violating their gender roles.

- **Race**

Is servant leadership colour blind? The vast majority of participants are white line managers. Based on research conducted in 2020, most top jobs in South Africa are heavily skewed towards Whites because of the country's past apartheid policies. More than 61% of the participants of the organization under study belonged to the highly represented White population. In accordance with a Stats SA report released in 2022, White South Africans are the least affected by South Africa's official unemployment rate. Despite the large percentage of participants belonging to a particular group, the views on servant leadership cut across racial boundaries.

- **Reporting lines**

The participants who were part of the study ranged from managers with one employee reporting to them, to others with more than 100 employees reporting to them. As far as their perceptions of servant leadership were concerned, they shared the same values and principles.

- **Roles**

There are a variety of roles within the organization, but all of the participants share the same servant leadership practices, with the exception of one participant who didn't even comprehend the concept but was open to it once it was explained.

4.3.3 Interview findings

4.3.3.1 Thematic analysis

The second phase of data collection involved interviews with participants that lasted about thirty to forty minutes each. As a result of covid restrictions during the interview process, all

interviews were conducted online through Microsoft Teams, with only one face-to-face interview. After verbatim transcriptions were made, themes were developed.

“Thematic analysis is the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data” (Maguire and Delahunt 2017:np). In thematic analysis, patterns of interest or relevance are identified in a data set and used to explain or address a research question. Analysing data thematically is more than simply summarizing it; it offers interpretation and perspective. The table below summarizes the themes that emerged from the data collected.

Table 16: Themes that emerged from the data.

Source: Developed by the researcher

Themes	Sub-themes	Categories
Theme 1: The perception of what servant leadership is	Sub-Theme 1.1: The benefits of servant leadership	(a) Staff feel cared for and trusted, which motivates them to render quality service to clients
		(b) Staff retention
		(c) Learning from employees through feedback from team members
		(d) Embracing diversity, which encourages a mind shift and the emergence of new leaders
	Sub-theme 1.2: Challenges that would affect the implementation of the principles of servant leadership	(a) Managers not embracing change brought about by servant leadership
		(b) Staff members/workers not embracing change brought about by servant leadership
		(c) Discrimination by race, culture and gender
Theme 2: Motivating factor in your current role: Is it the people or getting a promotion?	Sub-theme: 2.1: People as a motivating factor	
	Sub-theme 2.2: People and promotion as a motivating factor	
	Sub-theme 2.3: Fairness and justice, which gives workers a sense of belonging, as a motivating factor	
	Sub-theme 2.4: Empowering workers who in turn strive for client satisfaction as a motivating factor	
Theme 3: Team collaboration versus individual winning, communication with team members and getting their buy-in	Sub-theme 3.1 Working with Teams and Individuals	(a) Winning through collaboration with teams and individuals within the team
		(b) Winning through collaboration with teams only
		(c) Winning through focusing on efforts by individual members in the team (individuals only)
	Sub-theme 3.2 Communication with team members	
	Sub-theme 3.3 Getting buy-in from workers/team members	(a) Getting buy-in is important and necessary
(b) Getting buy in is not always necessary		
		(c) Getting buy-in from workers depends on the situation.
Theme 4: Trusting workers' accountability versus managers exercising authority	Sub-theme 4.1: Managers having trust in the workers	
	Sub-theme 4.2. Trusting workers and also applying management authority.	
	Sub-theme 4.3. No trust the workers	
Theme 5: Mentoring and coaching team members with ease	Sub-theme 5.1: Mentoring and coaching with ease	
	Sub-theme 5.2: Mentoring and coaching is not always easy	

THEME 1: PERCEPTIONS OF WHAT SERVANT LEADERSHIP IS

Most scholars characterize the notion of leadership as being about influence. However, servant leadership places the focus on the followers rather than on the leaders.

“Servant leadership is an understanding and practice of leadership that places the good of those led over the self-interest of the leader” (Laub 1999:81). The definition above is supported by different authors and the participants support the main constructs that describe servant leadership in action as defined by Laub (2004) as follows:

- They value people.
- They develop people.
- They build community.
- They display authenticity.
- They provide leadership.
- They share leadership.

1. A description of servant leadership

a. In servant leadership, the leader is perceived as the one who serves the team.

The participants believe that this type of leadership substitutes transactional behaviour with relational follower-serving behaviour that fosters trust, humility, growth, and accountability.

Participant 9: *“Well, in my opinion, it sounds like it's a style of leadership where the leader doesn't necessarily see himself as better than the individuals or the team that he leads. But rather being in a position to serve them, grow them and develop them in the process.”*

Participant 4: *“I think in terms of your leadership skills, it's not more about you as an individual, but more about the company and your subordinates. Yes, service to the people that are under you and the company.”*

b. Servant leadership is collaborative in nature.

Team members are empowered to express their opinions, and the leader engages with them in a collaborative manner.

Participant 10: *“I think it’s about leadership that is fairly collaborative. It is leadership that is not autocratic.”*

Participant 8: *“It’s obviously working with your workforce, not dictating towards your people, your subordinates. It almost does away with the thought of having subordinates so to speak, that you are one of the team and you’re contributing from a leadership perspective as opposed to a manager perspective.”*

c. Servant leadership creates an enabling environment where workers are empowered, motivated and are allowed to grow.

Providing the right environment for team members to thrive and grow will help them become better in their roles. Leaders should encourage team members to make decisions that will affect their performance.

Participant 7: *“For me, leadership or management has always been enabling the people that are around you or that report to you to actually do their work. In applying the servant leadership approach, my main objective is to make sure that those people reporting to me or that I’m managing have got everything they need to actually do their job. So, in that sense, I see it as a servant leadership or the way that I do it.”*

Participant 12: *“I think it is about empowering the people reporting to you. When you are a manager, you only focus on doing your job. In addition to that you make sure that you encourage them to be in the position that you are in.”*

d. Servant leadership is exemplary and ethical.

A servant leader is one whose behaviour exemplifies ethical standards.

Participant 14: *“You need to lead by example and you need to serve them in a sense by providing them with the right tool sets in order for them to achieve their best results so that is how I see it. Getting the best results out of people is to see what they need and provide that to them.”*

Participant 5: *“Do we lead our teams morally and ethically lead by example? Is there an alignment to your ethics or your way that you want your team to work? The way you control your emotions is very much aligned to your leadership, and how we lead the team to achieve your perceived goals of what the business wants to achieve.”*

Sub-Theme 1.1: The benefits of servant leadership

All the participants thought that servant leadership could benefit employees, employers, and customers.

Several previous studies have demonstrated that servant leadership positively affects work engagement levels and increases organizational citizenship (Carter and Baghurst 2013; De Clercq 2014; Bobbio et al. 2012; Newman et al. 2015; Ozyilmaz and Cicek 2015; Panaccio et al. n.d.; Walambwa et al. 2010). In addition to this, employees can also go above and beyond the call of duty for customers when they have this type of culture (Liden et al. 2014).

Category (a): *Staff feeling cared for and trusted, which motivates them to render quality service to clients.*

Participant 3: *“I think it’s also important to consider in that context that our people are a very expensive resource to our organization and therefore need to be looked after.... So, I think yes, it’s very important that we serve our people well in order for them to achieve their objectives by serving our clients.”*

Participant 1: *“I firmly believe that we can always learn. We can always be better; we can always look to do more. Yes, because I think by adopting more servant leadership and a*

broader servant mind set, we will look more on serving our people and our clients before anything else.”

Category (b): Staff retention

Participant 7: *“Look at the moment where we are. I believe there's a big issue with retaining of staff and ensuring that you get the correct staff who can actually deliver and there's a big fight out there. You can see the amount of people that actually resign. And the pressure that we run to recruit again. I believe managing your team correctly and or managing the individuals correctly in such a way that they feel recognized and that you actually have a kind of a personal connection with them would lower that you know would make them think twice on going somewhere else or resigning.”*

Category (c): Learning through feedback from team members

Participant 16 *“I think any organization is open to and I think our organization has shown some indication of trying to learn from or listen to their employees and act on that. So, I'd say that there's always an opportunity to learn and grow up. What I can say is that, around mentorship and the culture that we work in, individually, I think everybody tries to make their bit. But as an organizational process or culture policy, I think there's definitely space for any organization to grow in and learn.”*

Participant 14: *“I think because the teams are so close to the work that we do and also close to the clients, that is, they are the front line. They experience that interaction with managers all the time and managers making sure that they are comfortable and happy, making sure that they feel that they can give feedback without any negative feedback and without any repercussions. I think that's incredibly important. So, I think we do give the team the opportunity to give feedback. We do give the team the opportunity to tell us what will make them happy, what they need, what they require. So yes, I do think our company can benefit from all of that.”*

Category (d): Embracing diversity which encourages a mind shift and the emergence of new leaders

Participant 10: It creates a mind shift in managers. *“The benefit is that it changes the mind-set of the leaders of the organisation by introducing new leaders, which benefits the organisation. I think more and more it’s something that I’ve just seen – a shift in the top of leaders – and the type of people who are successful is quite different from the kind of people that were successful many years ago. And I’m encouraged to see that shift. And it’s not perfect, but I definitely see that shift and I see it acknowledged as a shift in a lot of respects.”*

Sub-Theme 1.2: Challenges that would affect the implementation of the principles of servant leadership

When not addressed correctly, discrimination on the basis of race, gender, and culture can impede the implementation of servant leadership which could lead to leadership bias. Some individuals tend to have servant leadership characteristics naturally; and, just like many other natural tendencies, they can be honed and developed through learning and practicing to maximize the advantages (Spears 2010). Listed below are some of the challenges based on findings that may affect the implementation of servant leadership from the perspective of management and employees.

Category (a): Managers not embracing change brought about by servant leadership

Participant 15: Managers who are not flexible to embrace new ways of doing things. *“I think people who would be impacted from a manager’s point of view, are people that haven’t been practicing servant leadership. There’s some managers that have strong personalities who believe that it’s their way or the highway. So, you’re going to have a lot of those people struggling to sort of come to terms with it...”*

Participant 17: Managers finding it difficult to change their mind set. *“Well, it’s going to be a total change of how people are being managed and some managers, like you say, are not like*

that. It's going to be a challenge. I think, it's a very nice idea, but it's going to be challenging getting people to change their minds to say that they must now serve and not only be a boss."

Category (b): Managers' experience of staff members/workers not embracing change brought about by servant leadership

Participant 2: Difficult to change how people have been working. *"I think in some cases if you've worked in an organization for a very long time. I mean where I work, we've got people who have been here from the beginning, like 23 years, 16 years..... It's a bit different, so for me the challenge is the people that's been there for very long and they are stuck in their old ways."*

Participant 11: People do not easily accept change. *"You know people being people I would foresee challenges and considering different people's background and ages and how set they are in their ways there would definitely be challenges. I would foresee there would be hurdles and I think it's more around mind set perhaps. You know embracing a new approach that you're not comfortable with, that type of almost leaning towards a change management. I think people are set in their ways by nature and if this is not your approach or inherent approach, then I think you would definitely encounter obstacles in implementing it or trying to implement it. You know you still got people who believe, if your bum isn't on the seat in the office, for instance, you're not being productive. So, it's that kind of old school mind-set that would need a little bit more persuasion."*

Category (c): Discrimination by race, culture and gender

Participant 12: Racial discrimination in the workplace. *"As I said, mostly when I talk about management here in Cape Town, 95% it is white people. The way I see it, black people don't matter. This will mean that all people's concerns would need to be taken into consideration. If our management was diverse, in terms of races, cultures and decisions are not made based on*

a particular race, things would be different. I cannot blame anyone in particular; this is based on the history of the company. The other issue is the trust factor. I don't think we have moved on completely in terms of concerns of the past that affected our country as a whole, even in terms of salaries where you will find people doing the same job, but salaries are not the same. I don't understand why that's still the case. I honestly don't think this servant leadership would be accepted based on the current experience."

Participant 4: Discrimination based on culture. *"There is a huge problem of diversity within the company in the management from middle management to higher management and my view and my experience has been that people don't take the time to understand other cultures and other people's cultural beliefs and religious beliefs. So, people tend to actually come with any type of personality where they think that they can actually just tell people. Or just police people without trying to understand why certain behaviours manifest. Also, it could be because of religious beliefs or because of cultural beliefs and stuff like that. So, I think the impediment would be diversity within the management structure in our company."*

THEME 2: MOTIVATING FACTOR IN YOUR CURRENT ROLE: IS IT THE PEOPLE OR GETTING PROMOTION?

From the findings obtained, most participants are excellent servant leaders, motivated by serving the interests of people. The organization encourages the leaders to have one on one conversations with their team members where they can voice their concerns in a safe environment. Although this practice is not measured, most participants agree that these sessions are beneficial to developing relationships between leaders and employees, and they are making an effort to hold these sessions at least once a month.

According to Laub leaders always face two choices. "Do I lead to serve my own interests first? Or do I lead to serve the needs of those led before my own self-interest?" (2004:7).

From Greenleaf's original essay:

The best test, and difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, not be further deprived?"

(Greenleaf 1970:7)

Sub-theme 2.1 People as the motivating factor

Participant 14: *"Of course, it is the people. I mean I don't really care about the promotions; I care about giving our clients a good service and I know if we do that the promotions will just come, I mean that's not something that we have to worry about if we give that good service".*

Participant 13: *"Definitely the people. I think the promotion will come by itself... In my role as a service delivery manager, I need to make sure that we deliver on the contracts, and we need to serve our clients. So, I'm not only serving my team, I'm serving my clients and that can result in a promotion when the time is right."*

Sub-theme 2.2: People and promotion as the motivating factor

Participant 9: *"Look, it's always great for teams to achieve something and to receive credit as a team. I think that's great for team building and it's also great for the entire division to have a common goal to work towards something that creates a great culture. But there is always space for, you know to celebrate achievements by individuals as well. So, I will never do the one at the cost of the other. I think there's place for both. But the one that has a bigger impact on the division is where teams achieve something and that is celebrated."*

Participant 6: *"It's the people first. And yes, ultimately, hopefully leading into a promotion."*

Sub-theme 2.3: Fairness and justice, which give workers a sense of belonging

Participant 7: Fairness and justice *"My driving force is really fairness and justice and ensuring consistency and fairness, to the employer sometimes and fairness to the employee...."*

Participant 1: A sense of belonging *“It’s definitely not the promotion. For me it is really about feeling and belonging and the people under me as well. We are sitting normally in the office for 8 hours and you need to be able to enjoy that time as well. You need to feel you are being heard and your input is appreciated....”*

Sub-theme 2.4: Empowering workers who in turn strive for client satisfaction

Participant 8: Empowering people. *“I enjoy helping people but in the main, I’m a custodian of the brand.... Obviously, I need to mentor and coach them to perform at their best, to ultimately progress the brand, if that makes sense.”*

Participant 12: Client satisfaction. *“It is more about the client... My objectives are to make sure that the project that we work on is successful and the set time is achieved. It is not about us our company; it is about what we are offering our clients and the service that we deliver. We try and make sure that whatever is being sold has been delivered.”*

THEME 3: TEAM COLLABORATION VERSUS INDIVIDUAL WINNING, COMMUNICATION WITH TEAM MEMBERS AND GETTING THEIR BUY-IN

Almost all of the participants agree that in order to be effective at work, they must work together, which means helping each other achieve both individual and organizational goals. As with all teams, however, there are always some super performers who go above and beyond their call of duty. Celebrating these individuals can improve employee satisfaction, as it can make them feel appreciated. As participants explain, many responses emphasize how they collaborate as a team, which results in positive outcomes for the individual as well as the organization.

Research shows that servant leadership creates an environment that enables and promotes collaboration within a team (Garber et al. 2009; Irving and Longbotham 2007). Thus, it allows

for the development of an organization-wide culture of service (Ehrhart 2004; Garber et al. 2009; Hu and Liden 2011; Walumbwa et al. 2010).

Sub-theme 3.1 Winning through working with teams and individuals

A servant leader builds high-performing teams by understanding the strength and benefits of competent, engaged, and capable teams (Russell 2019; Autry 2001). A servant leader pays close attention to the needs of the individuals who are part of the team (Greenleaf 1977/2002). As a result, they make sure the team members' needs are met because they are aware and they want to serve and, as a result, teams have the resources they need to be successful. The categories below describe how participants view winning through working with teams and individuals.

Category (a): Winning through collaboration with teams and individuals

Participant 14: Individual and team. *“I think it depends. I think there's a time when an individual is really shining and they need credit for themselves and you need to give that credit to them. At other times when the team is really collaborated and worked well together, then of course it goes to the whole team. It's not 100% either way. It depends on the situation. And most of the time I mean if we collaborate and in a perfect world, that's what we want, then the team will always get the credit, but unfortunately, there will always be some people that shine and some people that don't.”*

Participant 17: Teams and individuals. *“It depends. I think every situation is different because sometimes if it's at a team effort, then I would say the whole team, but sometimes in a team effort, one specific person can also do more than the rest of the team. So, it depends on the situation.”*

Category b: Winning through collaboration with teams only

Participant 17: Team collaboration: *“Like I said, I prefer a team effort because it is not only one person that gets the job done.”*

Participant 5: Teamwork. *“Yes. I think this depends on what field you work in. OK, specifically, if you are talking about finance and in the finance team or the financial operations team on my side, I think teamwork is more important than the individual. It doesn’t really help you celebrating one person because it’s ultimately a team effort. So yeah, in my opinion it has to be as a team rather than an individual.”*

Category (c) Winning through focusing on efforts by individual members in the team

Participant 11: *“I think internally if I can put it that way within our team, I’d like to give individuals credit... and I think in terms of the credit it is important to acknowledge the individual.”*

Participant 12: *“Even in teams, there will always be someone who stands out, if the team gives 100% effort, that person will give 150% effort, even though the project is successful as a team, if there’s someone who gave himself fully, and gave more, in terms of encouraging him or help others, that person can be recognized over and above the team recognition.”*

Sub-theme 3.2 Communication with team members

Participants reported adequate interaction with staff regarding the organization’s vision and strategy. In addition to regular meetings, there are also decision-making ceremonies in which information is shared and decisions are made. Despite the regular occurrence of team meetings, members of the team also interact with their line managers in one-on-one sessions.

Participant 14: Communicate, collaborate and get inputs. *“Yes, I mean like I said earlier, we encourage them to get involved. We encourage them to give input into things. So, we share important information that we get. We share with them important decisions that gets made and the reasons why they are made as well. And then we get their inputs where it is possible. We try to be as collaborative as possible and we don't make decisions because we think we know better. We make decisions because as a team we can do it much better. So, we get as much inputs as we can before we make decisions”.*

Participant 13: Communicate and get inputs. *“We normally have weekly meetings whereby I discuss critical points, give them feedback on the client stuff or tasks that we need to do. I ask for their inputs and I do make use of them.”*

Sub-theme 3.3 Getting buy-in from workers/team members

From all participants’ feedback, it appears that managers and supervisors are trying to persuade the employees rather than coerce them into adopting organizational goals and objectives. There was unanimous agreement that explaining some decisions and getting their acceptance is the best way to gain their agreement. Categories below detail some quotes from the participants.

Category (a): Buy-in is important

Participant 3: Buy-in is important. *“Yeah, I think it's important to get buy-in from your team and I think you need to manage that from where you can effectively change. So, when you say buy-in that means to say that if something has to happen, I need them to buy into it. I think it is important. Firstly, in my opinion there is a need to get your team to buy in into a collective vision. So, it has to be a collective vision for your team.”*

Participant 12: Buy-in is better than using authority. *“If the team members don’t agree on a particular issue, even though you can use the authority to get people to do what you want them to do, at the end of the day it won’t happen the way you want it to happen. If there’s no agreement, it won’t be easy to achieve the goal. Using the position won’t work. I wouldn’t advise”.*

Category (b): Getting buy-in is not always necessary

Participant 6: Not always necessary. *“There are times where you must decide and obviously everybody has to abide with it. But that is basically company policy driven down, but at most when it comes to the team and decisions, I involve them.*

Participant 8: Buy-in is not always necessary. *“Not for decisions, if that's what you're referring to, I'm empowered to make decisions on behalf of my team. But what I do like to do*

is just to consult on certain occasions. Definitely not on all decisions because it's too much effort and it'll take too long. But on certain key decisions I do get inputs from the team and the individuals within the team that are very close to an account. For example, if I need to make some type of strategic or long term or possibly a revenue impacting decision on it on a certain account, then I will liaise with the people on that account."

Category (c): Getting buy-in from workers depends on the situation

Participant 10: *"I think it does depend on the situation. So, I think context is important and buy-in is always ideal but it's not always possible. But I think if you can explain the context, most people might not enjoy the change or enjoy the decision, but they at least understand even if they don't agree with it. I think it's about providing context and I have experienced leaders that are so focused on getting buy-in from all the team leaders or the team members that they never also make a decision. And that also creates uncertainty and distrust amongst the team. So sometimes it's better to make a decision, a little bit autocratically, but providing the context when it is needed. And it does come to a point where you kind of have to say, I'm giving you as much context as I can but now, I'm actually making the decision. But then you can be accountable for the consequences."*

Participant 9: *"There are exceptions to that though. You know if it comes to ethical issues, integrity, those kinds of things you know that's not negotiable. It has to be done the right way. Then I'm prepared to make a decision without the necessary input."*

THEME 4: TRUSTING WORKERS' ACCOUNTABILITY VERSUS MANAGERS EXERCISING AUTHORITY

An environment in which team members openly discuss expectations and even own up to their mistakes and failures will eliminate the need for leaders to exercise authority. The majority of

participants indicated that they typically rely on trust and the skills of the people to accomplish team objectives and rarely use their authority.

The accountability concept aligns with Gunnarsdóttir's (2014) findings that the employees of a servant leadership organization are held accountable for their work and performance. Sousa and Van Dierendonck (2015) observed that accountability is part of the “lead” element of servant leadership (Ragnarsson, Kristjánsdóttir et al. 2018).

Russel (2001), Russel and Stone (2002) and Patterson (2003) identified trust as one of the key attributes of servant leadership. Joseph and Winston (2005) found that servant-led organizations have greater levels of trust in their leaders as well as greater levels of organizational trust than organizations not perceived as servant-led.

Sub-theme 4.1: Having trust in the team

Participant 4: Trust them without using authority. *“I trust them to do their best. They've actually proven that they can actually work without me policing them. I don't believe in policing people. I believe in giving people a stage to actually be able to prove what they can actually offer. So yes, I believe in my team. I don't need to police them.”*

Participant 11: Trusts the team. *“I am very fortunate in that regard. I've got a mature team and once something has been allocated to them, they can literally run with it from start to finish and knowing that they can ask questions anywhere along the line.”*

Sub-theme 4.2: Trusting workers and also applying management authority

Most participants trust their employees to do their job well, but it is important to understand each member of your team as some may need close monitoring depending on their maturity levels.

Participant 8: It depends on the team members' level of accountability. *“It's very individual specific. Certain individuals can be left and they can achieve the desired outputs and the*

desired goals that we expect. Other individuals require coaching and mentoring to achieve that same goal so, it is not one size fits all.”

Participant 18: Trusts but there are exceptions. *“I do I trust them wholeheartedly, and I know they're going to do what they need to do. I don't have any issues there. However, there is an engineer that I do need to be behind. I hate micromanagement. I don't know you want to use that word, but I do need to be a little bit behind him a lot, put it that way, to make sure he does his job. He does his job great, he had no issues, but he is a bit lazy.”*

Sub-theme 4.3: Do not trust workers

One of the participants showed some concern regarding trusting his staff members. This can be influenced by the fact that the line manager has not been working with the team for a long time. These concerns are in what Seto and Sarros (2016) define as “cognition-based trust” which is based on “evidence supporting the other person’s reliability and competence under specific circumstances”

Participant 5: Do not trust. *“Part of the issue is that you know sometimes there's a little bit of a trust issue from my side with my team and whether they can fulfil the duties effectively. Hence why I've got maybe a little bit of authority. I wouldn't say I'm authoritarian. I think maybe I don't trust enough to give the work out and let them fail forward. I think that's what it is.”*

THEME 5: MENTORING AND COACHING TEAM MEMBERS WITH EASE

The participants believe that mentoring and coaching can improve employee performance, increase team engagement, and improve individual performance, especially in the technology sector where employees are always required to update their skills.

Yukl asserts that, “mentoring is a relationship in which a more experienced leader helps a less experienced protégé” (2010:388). The goal of mentoring is to motivate mentees to be accountable for their work. According to the results, many participants find mentoring easy,

although some find it a bit difficult to implement because of work schedules and others find it even harder to work with disengaged employees.

Below are some of the excerpts from the interviews regarding mentoring.

Sub-theme 5.1. Mentoring and coaching with ease

Participant 1: *“I do find it easy, but I'm also careful not to over coach. I don't think we should be telling people how to do their jobs. We should be showing people what the vision is and affording them the ability to do what is required.”*

Participant 4: *“I do. As I said to you, these are the people that we've actually built relationships before. It's people that I've learnt to appreciate who have actually come to trust me to lead them. And it's people that can talk to me about anything. I have actually fostered a relationship where they know that I am available for them. I have an open-door policy to speak about work-related stuff including personal stuff that will impact work as well. And in whatever matter they need to discuss, I'm open to actually speak to them.”*

Sub-theme 5.2. Mentoring and coaching not always easy

Participant 6: *“Some of them it's easier than others. It takes time. I mean I've got one that I'm trying to coach and guide and all those types of things but it can be difficult. Also, I'm getting to the point now where I have to throw in the HR process for this person because it can't go on forever. You have to make a call as well, and in that case, you have to show some form of authority. Now here's the guy who is not interested and for me it's simple if you're not interested, tell me so and we'll try and move you. And if you don't want to be moved, then the best place is for you to find something else, because I'm not going to allow one person to drop the morale of the whole team.”*

Participant 11: *“Given the context of our work, it is easy to pass IP across. I think the way a person mentors a team member is very personal. I don't always find it easy all the time, but I*

find it rewarding. So, to answer your question, it is something that I'm passionate about. There's no two ways about it."

A majority of participants cited mentoring as a way to build and facilitate team members' growth and learning. When a leader coaches or mentors their subordinates, the foundation of trust is essential (Du Plessis and Nel 2015). During her research, Poon (2006) suggested that certain characteristics of servant leaders (moral love, humility, altruism, self-awareness, authenticity, integrity, trust, empowerment, and service) may affect the self-efficacy of mentors and mentees.

4.4 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to present the data as well as analyse the findings in relation to the research questions. As outlined in Chapter 1, all the research questions have been addressed in this study. As a result of thematic analysis of data, the presentation was organized into themes. A summary of the study, conclusions, recommendations, and implications for future research are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the study by highlighting key research findings according to the research aims and research questions. In addition, it will examine and describe the limitations of the study, as well as possible future research. Additionally, this chapter will outline the recommendations needed to enable the conclusions from this study to be realized.

5.2 Research Objectives

For the purpose of this study, a semi-structured interview and a self-administered questionnaire were used to collect qualitative data. Qualitative methods are based on the claim that there are multiple realities that are socially defined (Firestone 1987). Below are the objectives of the study and the discussion thereof.

5.2.1 Objective 1

“To investigate the participants’ conceptualisation/s of servant leadership”.

The participants' understandings of the concept servant leadership share some similarities but include different emphases. As for the similarities, most of the participants agreed that servant leadership is not about the managers, but about looking out for the needs of the team members they manage. Collaboration and empowering employees were the key messages.

There is a common link between all attempts to define servant leadership- the prominence of servanthood (Eva, Robin et al. 2019). Hale and Fields provided a comprehensive definition of servant leadership as “an understanding and practice of leadership that places the good of those led over the self-interest of the leader, emphasizing leader behaviors that focus on follower development, and de-emphasizing glorification of the leader” ((2007: 99).

5.2.2 Objective 2

Servant leaders are distinguished from other leaders by the values, principles, and practices they employ every day. This objective was set to determine the perspectives of managers on the implementation of the principles, practices and values of servant leadership.

The emphasis was placed on people rather than promotion. This was the most prominent answer to this question. As a result of his desire to bring to the world a different approach to leadership, Greenleaf (1977 and 2002) developed the modern philosophy of servant leadership to harness the power of people by serving their needs.

Participants encouraged teamwork and collaboration during activities and often motivated team members to achieve goals and objectives. Despite the positive contribution of the behaviours described to teamwork and shared goals, a clear focus was placed on individual contributions where, at times, individuals will outperform others. Researchers, Ragnarsson, Kristjánsdóttir et al. (2018) found that servant leadership is experienced by valuing collaboration and shared foresight while accepting accountability and challenging goals to maintain high work standards.

In the interviews, it was also evident that leaders attempt to get the followers psychologically to “buy into” decisions. In addition, they stated that as leaders, they are always open to having discussions when the team members are not sure about what decisions to make or where they need guidance, in as much as they may not have all the answers to all their questions. From their responses, participants trusted their employees’ opinions on critical issues.

Good suggests that “nothing builds trust faster than a servant attitude” (2013:2) even when problems confront them, people know their leader genuinely cares about them and has their best interests at heart.

Almost all participants felt that the organization emphasizes and supports good behaviour, and they rarely have to use authority to accomplish tasks since most people are responsible for their

actions. Participant 17 noted that, “Authority is not necessary; they know what they need to do.” This is supported by most servant leadership researchers, that “accountability is an integral part of the practice of servant leadership” (Ragnarsson, Kristjánsdóttir et al. 2018). “Servant leaders empower others but expect accountability” (Focht and Ponton 2015).

Performance management and learning require accountability, since it provides the leader with direction, but the most significant aspect is that accountability drives learning “by making people feel accountable for their results” (Sousa and Van Dierendonck 2015:15). Regarding communication, participants concurred that taking the time to communicate with team members in the form of team meetings and one-on-one conversations is very important. In addition to communication and collaboration, getting the views of other team members and learning from them were also regarded as imperative. Empathy goes hand in hand with accepting others. Starratt (2004) noted that active listening requires sensitivity to words and the way they are said, as well as empathy for the words spoken. When you listen effectively, you evoke cooperation and trust from others, as well as collaboration toward a common goal.

Leaders who serve their followers emphasize communication and identify the followers’ needs (Rachmawati and Lantu 2014). McClellan asserted that “by listening, a servant leader is more able to gain awareness and understanding of the critical problems that underlie the challenges the followers face and creates a basis for problem solving” (2007:45). In addition to participation in decision-making, employees are given the opportunity to solve problems.

While mentoring may be natural for some people and not easy for others, the participants understand the value of helping employees to grow and prosper on a spiritual, professional, and personal level. Most participants take the time to mentor and understand the learning and development needs of their employees, as illustrated by one of the excerpts of the interview from Participant 10:

“I definitely look for opportunities every day with every situation to try and impart some sort of learning to them so that they can just do it a little bit more on their own the next time, even if it's just talking them through a problem that they are dealing with and bouncing off ideas.”

Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) considered empowerment as one of the dimensions of servant leadership. He further noted that servant leadership involves empowering people to do their work and evolve. Empowerment is defined by researchers “as a commitment to the process of providing the necessary coaching, mentoring, and support according to the need of an individual” (Coetzer, Bussin et al. 2017).

According to the feedback provided, mentorship relationships exist within the organization, and there is emphasis on helping people grow professionally. There is an environment that promotes learning within the organization. There were a limited number of participants who indicated that they appreciate mentoring but that tight schedules left them without time to impart knowledge to their team members.

According to Greenleaf (1977), developing followers into servant leaders is an essential component of servant leadership. The participants share Stanley and Clinton’s (1992) perspective that leaders are responsible for empowering their followers and helping them reach their full potential. Moreover, Van Dierendonck (2011) asserted that empowerment gives followers a sense of self-confidence and empowerment in the discharge of their duties.

One of the excerpts from the interview illustrates this view.

“I feel that the experience I have I shouldn't keep to myself. I also feel that if people are empowered, you will get out of them and if you give them the right tools, give them the necessary technical tools, but also give them the right mental tools as well as the right management tools. You get so much more out of them because they start understanding the bigger picture. They start understanding the reason for things being done in a certain way and that motivates them as well, to work in the same direction and to pull in the same direction.”

An integrated, holistic view of situations can be obtained by servant-leaders through awareness, particularly self-awareness, and commitment to self-awareness (Greenleaf 1977, cited in Spears, 2010). Ninety per cent of the participants asserted that they were aware of what motivates their team members.

One of the questions asked was whether the culture allows people to make mistakes, learn from them and make amends. There was evidence in the answers provided that there are always opportunities for team members to think outside the box, to create and obtain knowledge collectively, as well as to reflect on new knowledge and insights. The learning organization is one that continually grows its capacity to achieve the results it truly desires, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are cultivated, where collective aspiration is unleashed, and where people are continually learning how to learn together (Vat 2003). Senge (1990) popularized the notion of a learning organization in his seminal work, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. It is his belief that “dynamic learning organizations are built and maintained by servant leaders who lead because they choose to serve” (1997:17).

Senge stresses the importance of team learning as a foundation for organizational success. According to him, “if teams learn, they become a microcosm for learning throughout the organization” (1990:236). One way to implement this model is to hire leaders and organizational members who possess servant leadership qualities and to develop training programs to develop those traits further.

Servant leadership was unanimously deemed a viable form of leadership that would benefit an organization if successfully implemented. Some of the benefits mentioned include:

- That staff members will feel cared for and trusted, which will motivate them to deliver quality service to clients;
- Improvements in talent development and retention;

- Learning from team members' feedback; and
- That diverse employees will feel valued and cared for, and as a result new leaders will emerge because of this shifting mindset.

5.2.3 Objective 3

The third objective was to identify the challenges that would affect the implementation of the principles of servant leadership. The following were some of the challenges:

- **Managers not embracing change brought about by servant leadership:** Some managers continue to hold on to the perception that leadership is authority. Individuals who are required to work outside of their comfort zone or are thrown off their regular routine may not react well to such demands. Until 2020, line managers indicated that there was no “remote work”– “work done outside of the four walls of the office” (Wyld 2022) and when the COVID-19 pandemic began, the number of cases grew exponentially, some line managers were convinced that they needed to see them physically in the offices to believe that their team members were working. The mindsets were forced to change to accept the “new normal”.
- **Managers' experience of staff members/workers not embracing change brought about by servant leadership:** As individuals have different personalities, not everyone will appreciate a servant leader. It is possible for some to take advantage of the servant leader and become lax in their responsibilities. Others who perceive the leader as caring deeply about their needs may be tempted to put in less effort.
- **The management of diversity based on age, race, culture, and gender:** According to Irving (2010) the predominant culture plays a significant role in filtering acceptable behaviour, as well as determining what is unacceptable. Statistics South Africa (2018) reports that the labour market in South Africa remains dominated by certain historically privileged groups, and this has been a challenge for the organization. In fact, nearly 30

years after the establishment of democracy, racial and social discrimination remains prevalent in the South African work environment (McCallaghan, Jackson et al. 2020; Talbot and Durrheim 2012; Jaga et al. 2018).

5.3 Recommendations

This study adds to the existing literature by explaining why servant leadership is necessary in the twenty-first century. In this study, qualitative approaches were used in the IT sector, an area with limited research, particularly in South Africa. The study's findings suggest that organizations can benefit from servant leadership.

To maximize servant leadership, the issue of diversity in terms of race, culture, gender, and age needs to be addressed. This is a sensitive but crucial issue. It has been noted by Pekerti and Sendjaya (2010) that perceptions of what constitutes a leader are systematically different across cultures because most people of a given culture hold similar beliefs about the attributes of a typical leader and are exposed to similar organizational policies and practices. Irving (2010) and Bhawuk and Brislin (1992) are of the view that, as a way of respecting other cultures, people need to be interested in them, notice differences, and change their behaviour. According to Bhawuk and Brislin (1992), a variety of leadership styles or philosophies may be employed to cultivate such cultural awareness and sensitivity, but servant leadership provides a platform for taking into account followers' unique cultural perspectives.

Nart, Yaprak et al. (2018) conducted research and results showed that servant leadership has a strong effect on diversity perceptions of employees. Managers can take advantage of the servant leadership competencies for effective diversity management and to advance towards organizational goals.

"Post-COVID" is projected to be a time when remote work becomes the new normal. Today's technology can be used to communicate and collaborate effectively with one another, and as a result, leaders will need to manage intelligently to adapt to the new environment. An "open ear

policy” is urgently needed, as is empathizing with others and understanding their viewpoints as some employees will be fully remote.

In order to make study findings more user-friendly for gatekeepers involved in the research, the researcher proposes to distribute an abridged, user-friendly version.

5.4 Limitations

As indicated in the first chapter, data was collected through video interviews, given the COVID-19 protocols and limitations. Other limitations are as follows:

- The sample size of 18 participants is sufficient for a qualitative study. However only the IT sector was included, thus the results cannot be generalised to other sectors.
- Due to the lack of consideration of participants’ working experiences, the research may have captured a limited range of responses.

5.5 Future Research

The researcher believes that this study has been able to demonstrate the relevance of servant leadership in the twenty first century. In future research, a different sample group should be used to replicate this study. Examples being:

- Samples from different provinces with a greater diversity of management structures;
- The theoretical model has to be tested on a different population from a different region to determine if it holds up across cultural and geographical boundaries;
- Five, ten, or fifteen years from now, conduct a follow-up study with the same sample group to determine whether servant leadership has persisted.

5.6 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, the study's initial objectives are discussed in depth in order to determine if the objectives were met. In addition, recommendations and contributions were presented, as well as future research considerations. Today, when it is difficult to retain top talent and employees are disengaged, servant leadership is the answer to preserving a corporate culture that will meet the needs of clients and employees alike.

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APPENDIX 1: CONSENT FORM

UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL

For research with human participants

INFORMED CONSENT RESOURCE TEMPLATE

Note to researchers: Notwithstanding the need for scientific and legal accuracy, every effort should be made to produce a consent document that is as linguistically clear and simple as possible, without omitting important details as outlined below. Certified translated versions will be required once the original version is approved.

There are specific circumstances where witnessed verbal consent might be acceptable, and circumstances where individual informed consent may be waived by HSSREC.

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date:

Dear Colleague

My name is Phelisa Shandu, a research student in the University of KwaZulu Natal, working for [REDACTED] as the Project Management Lead in the Professional Services division. My contact details are: 220063991@stu.ukzn.ac.za +27 21 486 6667.

You are being invited to consider participating in a study titled “Is servant leadership radical enough for the 21st century: The case study of an Information Technology company in South Africa”. The objectives of the study are:

- To investigate the participants’ conceptualisation/s of servant leadership.
- To determine the perspectives of managers on the implementation of the principles, practices, and values of servant leadership.
- To investigate ways in which the principles and values of servant leadership can be applied in your organization, and
- To determine the enabling factors and challenges to the implementation of the principles of servant leadership

The study is expected to enroll about 15-20 participants or sufficient subjects from the middle management layer of the organization to achieve theoretical saturation. The study will involve a semi-structured interview conducted online via Microsoft teams/Zoom. The duration of your participation if you choose to enroll and remain in the study is expected to be for the time period of the interview.

The study may provide no direct benefit to participants but may benefit the institution as a whole.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number: **HSSREC/00003137/2021**).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at 220063991@stu.ukzn.ac.za/ +27 21 486 6667/ 083 4605344 or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

CONSENT (Edit as required)

I (Name) have been informed about the study entitled "Is servant leadership radical enough for the 21st century?: The case study of an Information Technology company in South Africa" by Phelisa Shandu.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at 220063991@stu.ukzn.ac.za/ +27 21 486 6667/ 083 4605344

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion YES / NO

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Witness
(Where applicable)

Date

Signature of Translator
(Where applicable)

Date

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL: GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND LEADERSHIP

M-COM RESEARCH PROJECT

RESEARCHER: Ms Phelisa Shandu

SUPERVISOR: Dr Simon Taylor

Objectives & Questions

- **To investigate the participants' conceptualisation/s of *servant leadership***
 - What is your understanding of servant leadership?

- **To determine the perspectives of managers on the implementation of the principles, practices and values of servant leadership**
 - What would you regard as driving force in your current role? Is it the people or getting promotion?
 - In your opinion, is collaboration critical in winning together as teams? Or would you prefer credit to be given to individuals instead of teams? Do you need to get buy in from your team on essential issues?
 - Do you trust your team to do their best or do you need to use your authority to get work done?
 - Do you take time and communicate important information to your team & ask thoughtful questions to get their views?
 - Do you find it easy to mentor and coach your team members?.
 - Do you know what motivates your team members?
 - Is the team culture one that allows people to make mistakes, learns from them and make amends?

- **To investigate ways in which the principles and values of *servant leadership* can be applied in your organization?**
 - *Do you think there are benefits that your organization can glean from the practice of servant leadership?*
 - *If yes, why?*
 - *If no, why?*

- **To determine the enabling factors and challenges to the implementation of the principles of servant leadership**
 - Are there any challenges that you foresee that would impact the implementation of the principles of servant leadership in your organization?

Table 1: Servant Leadership Scale

Source: Gold, et al, 2020, pg 7

Servant Leadership Scale					
Please read each statement carefully. Circle the number that represents your usual behavior for that statement. When you have responded to each behaviour, total your score. The interpretation is provided below.					
Behaviour	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1. I choose to serve through leadership.					
2. Concern for others motivate me.					
3. I prefer to serve anonymously, unrecognized.					
4. My leadership behaviour is moral.					
5. As a leader, I embrace truth & accept feedback.					
6. I have faith and philosophy which guides me.					
7. I respect diverse people and culture.					
8. I am aware of my emotions.					
9. I competently manage my emotions.					
10. I am aware and respect the emotions of others.					
11. I constructively manage my relationships					
12. I effectively work within and with different cultures.					
13. I empower peers and others around me.					
14. I take reasonable risks to serve others.					
15. I am a responsible steward of that entrusted to me.					
16. I competently meet my professional responsibilities.					
17. I build effective communities & teams to serve others.					
Total Score					
Excellent Servant Leader: 77-85 Proficient Servant Leader: 68-76	Competent Servant Leader: 60-67 Aspiring Servant Leader:<59				

APPENDIX 3: GATEKEEPER'S APPROVAL

Ms Phelisa Shandu (SN 220063991)
University of KwaZulu Natal
Graduate School of Business and Leadership
College of Law and Management Studies
Westville Campus
UKZN
Email: 220063991@stu.ukzn.ac.za

Dear Ms Phelisa Shandu

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Gatekeeper's permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research at Cape Town towards your postgraduate studies, provided Ethical clearance has been obtained.

We note the title of your research project is:

Is servant leadership radical enough for the 21st century?: The case study of an Information Technology company in South Africa.

It is noted that you will be constituting your sample by conducting interviews with staff members in Considering the regulations imposed during the lockdown i.e., restrictions on gatherings, travel, social distancing etc. ZOOM, Microsoft Teams or telephone interviews recommended.

Please ensure that the following appears on your notice/questionnaire:

- Ethical clearance approval letter.
- Research title and details of the research, the researcher and the supervisor.
- Consent form is attached to the notice/questionnaire and to be signed by user before he/she fills in questionnaire.
- Gatekeeper's approval by the Registrar.

Identity numbers and email addresses of individuals are not a matter of public record and are protected according to Section 14 of the South African Constitution, as well as the PAIA and POPI Act. For the release of such information over to yourself for research purposes, the will need express consent from the relevant data subjects. Data collected must be treated with due confidentiality and anonymity.

We hope that the study will add value not only to yourself but also to the entire at large.



Supervisor:

Dr. Simon Taylor (Ph.D, CIPS, SFHEA,MTA, M.Ed.) Regional Local Economic Development Project Manager



Yours sincerely (On behalf of)

Name:

Designation: Senior HR Business Partner

Contact:



APPENDIX 4: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



05 September 2021

Ms Phelisa Shandu (220063991)
Grad School Of Bus & Leadership
Westville Campus

Dear Ms Shandu,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00003137/2021

Project title: Is servant leadership radical enough for the 21st century: The case study of an Information Technology company in South Africa.

Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 23 July 2021 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. **PLEASE NOTE:** Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid until 05 September 2022.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

All research conducted during the COVID-19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 Email: hssrec@ukzn.ac.za Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics>

Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

APPENDIX 5: TURNITIN REPORT

Is servant leadership radical enough for the 21st century: The case study of an Information Technology company in South Africa.

ORIGINALITY REPORT

8%	6%	4%	%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	www.researchgate.net Internet Source	2%
2	jbssrnet.com Internet Source	2%
3	hdl.handle.net Internet Source	1%
4	Claudio Pousa. "chapter 11 Measuring Servant Leadership", IGI Global, 2014 Publication	1%
5	choicepaper.org Internet Source	1%
6	docplayer.net Internet Source	<1%