Investigating the Relationships Among Emotional Intelligence, Servant Leadership Behaviors and Servant Leadership Culture

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The focus of this study was to investigate the impact of leaders’ emotional intelligence on followers’ perception of servant leadership behaviors and servant leadership culture. Data was collected from two sample organizations (n=88) on the emotional intelligence of supervisors, followers’ perception of servant leadership behaviors from supervisors, and followers’ perception of servant leadership. Through multiple regression analysis, followers’ perception of servant leadership behaviors in supervisors was found to be a significant predictor (P < .01) of followers’ perception of servant leadership culture. In addition, supervisors’ ability to appraise the emotions of others was significant (p < .05) and supervisor’s use of emotion was moderately significant (p < .10) in predicting followers’ perception of servant leadership culture when entered into the regression model.

The concept of emotional intelligence (EI) has roots in social intelligence developed by Thorndike (1920) who proposed multiple forms of intelligence including abstract, mechanical and social. Over the past 10 years, Thorndike’s ideas prompted scholars to consider the concept of EI (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005b) as EI seems to explain the social intelligence gaps in IQ measures. The focus of EI as a social or relational skill appears to differentiate it from other attributes like IQ. Scott-Ladd and Chan (2004) describe social intelligence as “the ability to understand and relate to people” (p. 95). Mayer and Salovey (1997) characterize EI as the ability to accurately perceive reality through understanding and regulating one’s emotions while adapting and responding to the emotions of others. Emotional intelligence can support leaders in more accurately perceiving reality through understanding and relating to others’ emotions. Understanding and relating to others is especially vital to servant leadership in taking followers’ thoughts and feelings into account as part of serving them, including them in the visioning process and empowering them. Cherniss (2003a, 2003b) posits that leaders may not be able to reach their highest potential without emotional intelligence. In other words, it may be as important as cognitive intelligence.

House and Aditya (1997) explain that leadership is rooted in a social context and social intelligence is a required trait for leaders. House et al. (1999) describe leadership as a social process that is “the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organization” (p. 184). Hooijberg et al. (1997) found the understanding and regulation of emotions as significant aspects of leader social skills. Day (2000) acknowledged that emotional self-awareness and self-
regulation are vital to intrapersonal competencies associated with leadership development. Pescosolido (2002) suggests leaders function as managers of group emotion. McColl-Kenedy and Anderson (2002) established that transformational leaders manage the emotions of employees, particularly the emotions of frustration and optimism. George (1995, 2000) found leaders’ good mood, which emotions influence, can positively influence follower or team performance. EI appears to be associated with leaders’ social competence and ability to provide a positive environment for followers. Servant leaders utilize their social skills and create a positive environment as part of their service in taking into account followers’ input in developing the vision and then empowering followers in relationship to the vision.

Pirola-Merlo et al. (2002) propose that the need for research into the emotional aspects of work is urgent and the lack of it is hampering progress in understanding organizational behavior. Johnson and Indvik (1999) explain that in past decades workers were expected to leave their emotions at home as rationality was the tone of most organizational environments. Scholars propose leadership research has focused quantitatively on the leader’s external behavior (Yukl, 2002) and emphasized cognitive traits (Lord & Brown, 2001) while the investigation of the emotional processes of leaders has been neglected. Albrow (1992) suggests that feelings may be viewed as interfering with rationality and effective decision making which causes them to be ignored in the literature. Advances in understanding emotions have challenged this view. Researchers have determined that emotional processes precede or at least accompany cognition (Dickman & Stanford-Blair, 2002; Massey, 2002). Massey states, “It is generally the case that unconscious emotional thoughts will precede and strongly influence our rational decisions” (p. 20). Rahim and Minors (2003) found EI to increase problem solving ability and EI has been positively associated with conscientiousness (Douglas, Frink, & Ferris, 2004) and concern for quality (Rahim & Minors, 2003). The organizational literature has been cognitively dominated (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005a; Ilgen & Klein, 1989) and EI can help explain the contributions of the emotional dimension of leadership and organizational life. This paper investigates the potential impact of EI on servant leadership and on the culture of servant leadership in organizations.

Theory and Model

Emotional Intelligence

Spector (2005) describes EI as a controversial topic because of the debate over its definition, nature, measurement and application. Locke (2005) proposes that the concept of EI is so broadly defined and inclusive of other social concepts that it is vague and without meaning. It is important to recognize that the concept is new and ongoing published research is needed to support continued definition of the concept. Landy (2005) acknowledges that a good portion of the EI self-report data resides in proprietary databases, out of reach from the necessary scientific research and analysis of the peer review process. The confusion over EI prompted Conte (2005) to review and critique several of the key models and instruments. During Conte’s (2005) summarization, he proposes the Mayer and Salovey (1997) model and measure as the most promising one for researchers to use in scientific investigation.

Mayer and Salovey. Salovey and Mayer (1990) seem to focus on emotions as one aspect of social intelligence. Salovey and Mayer are the earliest developers of the concept and define EI as “the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions” (p. 189). Mayer and Salovey’s (1997) most recent framework can be summarized as: (a) the ability to perceive, appraise, and express emotion through recognizing and monitoring emotions in oneself and others; (b) the ability to access, understand and use emotions as necessary to communicate feelings or influence other cognitive processes; (c) the ability to sense, analyze and understand emotions in terms of how to best use emotional understandings to discern intensity, contradictory emotions, and sequences of emotions; and (d) the ability to regulate emotions through engaging, disengaging, reflecting upon, and evaluating emotions so as to promote positive over negative emotional exchanges. Wong and Law (2002) simplified the Mayer and Salovey (1997) model into self emotional appraisal (SEA), others’ emotional appraisal (OEA), use of emotions (UOE) and regulation of emotions (ROE) then developed a 16 item self-scoring instrument that measures EI in terms of the model.

Emotional intelligence and leadership. Several researchers suggest the importance of emotions in the process of leadership (Ashkanasy & Tse, 2000; Brief & Weiss, 2002; Kanfer & Klimoski, 2002). Bass (1990) found an association between emotional maturity, managerial effectiveness and managerial development.
Researchers (Lombardo & McCauley, 1988; McCall & Lombardo, 1983; Van Velsor & Leslie, 1995) found emotional instability to be the number one predictor of middle and top management failure. Kellet et al. (2002) offers that perception of leadership skill is impacted by leader emotional ability through empathy. Yukl (2002) describes emotionally intelligent people as more well adjusted, less psychologically disturbed, more aware of personal strengths and limitations, less defensive and more growth oriented, and less self-centered than those with less emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence has been found to be a predictor of success and performance (C. Cherniss, 2003a; Sivanathan & Fekken, 2002; Van Rooy & Viswesvaran, 2004) in top leaders (Dulewicz & Higgs, 2003) and in managers’ effectiveness in other cultures (Shipper, Kincaid, Rotondo, & Hoffman, 2003). Goleman (1998b) explains emotional competence as a capability that can be learned in order to contribute to outstanding performance at work.

Emotional Intelligence and Servant Leadership Behaviors

Winston and Hartsfield (2004) propose similarities exist between the concepts of EI and servant leadership. Greenleaf (1977) proposes servant leaders bring inspiration, reflection, empathy, foresight and intuition, perceptivity, and relational aptitude to their service which involve emotional intelligence within the leaders. Researchers have found support for three variables in servant leadership including service, empowerment and visioning (Dennis & Winston, 2003; Page & Wong, 2000). This discussion will focus on the extent to which EI influences the servant leadership behaviors of service, empowerment and visioning.

Kellett, Humphrey, and Sleeth (2002) found empathy is an important predictor of leadership emergence. Empathy is a key trait that servant leaders display (1977) in serving, empowering, and casting vision to followers. Salovey and Mayer (1990) propose that “empathy may be a central characteristic to emotionally intelligent behavior” (p. 194). Salovey and Mayer define empathy as “the ability to comprehend another’s feelings and re-experience them oneself.” Batson and Coke (1981) describe empathy as “an emotional response elicited by and congruent with the perceived welfare of someone else” (p. 169). Merriam-Webster (2005) describes the intuition involved in empathy in that the empathizer can vicariously experience another person’s thoughts, feelings, and experience without necessarily having the person objectively or clearly communicate them. Aronfreed (1970) suggests that non-verbal communication through social cues are transmitted by the affected person and picked up by the empathic individual. Rapisardo (2002) explains that the individual who can sense the feelings of others is more capable of developing emotional bonds with others, which is an aspect of developing closer relationships. Servant leaders care about the feelings of followers and show this by facilitating more mutual exchanges of power and follower input into the vision so that followers feel valued, served and the most effective solution is reached for the greater good.

EI and service. Schutte et al. (2001) found a link between EI and service in that employees with EI tend be more interested in outcomes that benefit others as well as themselves. Servant leaders serve the greater good of others through not seeking recognition, learning from followers, serving potentially to the point of personal sacrifice, and seeing leadership as responsibility over position (Page & Wong, 2000). Greenleaf (1977) captures the emotions of servant leaders in his statement, “The servant leader is servant first . . . it begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first” (p. 27). Yet servant leaders do not stop with understanding their own feelings as part of their service includes empathy and taking others’ feelings into account. In fact, servant leaders learn from followers’ feelings and ideas. Carmeli (2003) found emotional intelligence to augment altruistic behavior in senior managers. Winston (2003) suggests the servant leader is able to focus his or her feelings on serving others as opposed to feeling a sense of servitude or requirement. Collins (2001a) explains the character of the leader through strong humility and will that supports the leaders’ focus on serving others. Service is not taken from the servant leader; instead it is felt and freely chosen by the leader. If the definition of servant leadership excludes the leader’s emotional choice to serve others, then misinterpreting the underlying motives as weak or subservient may lead to a misinterpretation of the concept of servant leadership.

Goleman (1998a) tells the story of a manager that was skeptical about a new service that her company was about to introduce because she had wanted to run the project and was not selected as project manager. She had enough emotional self awareness to explain to her team and her boss why it was hard for her to get behind the rollout of this new service and asked them to give her some time to deal with reality. She was able to work through her emotions and consider her team so that a week later she was fully supporting the project and serving the greater good of the team and organization.
Emotional intelligence enables servant leaders to choose extreme acts of service that may be considered sacrificial nature. EI has been found to have a relationship with satisfaction (Wong & Law, 2002), the ability to handle stress (C. Cherniss, 2003a), mood management and higher levels of self esteem (Ciarrochi, Chan, & Caputi, 2000). All of these traits are important during times of sacrificial service. In a broadcast of Dateline NBC (Phillips, 2004), Larry Spears explained the strength of inner character that motivates sacrifice in servant leaders. Emotional intelligence increases the leaders’ stamina in the midst of sacrificial service. Choi and Mai-Dalton (1998) propose that followers respond to a leader’s sacrifice and service in reciprocal ways.

EI and empowerment. Emotional intelligence has been found to influence the transformational leadership trait of individualized consideration (Barling, Slater, & Kelloway, 2000; Gardner & Stough, 2002; Hartsfield, 2003; Leban & Zulauf, 2004; Mandell & Pherwani, 2003; Palmer, Walls, Burgess, & Stough, 2001) which is the leader’s ability to meet the follower’s need for empowerment through achievement, growth, and development (B. M. Bass & Avolio, 1994). Winston (2003) suggests servant leaders empower through providing followers with authority, accountability, responsibility, and resources as well as power to achieve what the follower wants to achieve in relation to the vision. Melrose (1995) elaborates on empowerment by explaining it as setting up clear and realistic expectations, goals, and responsibilities while allowing followers to self-direct and fail. Goleman (1998a) suggests that emotionally self aware leaders can make decisions that require an honest assessment of their own and others’ strengths and weaknesses so that followers are directed into appropriate levels of responsibility and authority. Caruso, Mayer and Salovey (2001) propose leaders use emotions to empower through encouraging “open-minded decision making, planning, and idea generation by considering multiple points of view” (p. 64). Buchen (1998) describes the reciprocity of power as most important to the servant leader’s mission of empowering others. Servant leaders display EI and empowerment by inviting followers to do their own thinking without appealing to positional power so that power, authority, responsibility, and resources can be shared. Followers feel valued and better utilized when servant leaders allow for more mutual exchanges of power rather than making followers feel subservient.

Emotional intelligence was found to have a positive impact on leader self-esteem and emotional well-being (Schutte, Malouff, Simunek, McKenley, & Holland, 2002) as well as the willingness of followers to take on additional roles within the organization (Wong & Law, 2002). Howatson-Jones (2004) states “for teams to operate effectively, leadership cannot be claimed by one person for all situations but needs to be rotated according to circumstances and skills” (p. 21). Ba Banutu-Gomez (2004) challenges servant leaders to become “hero makers” by selling the team’s ideas, removing obstacles to productivity, overcoming internal resistance and shielding the team from bureaucracy. Emotional intelligence soothes any feelings of threat or insecurity within the empowering servant leader so that the leader can empower followers by valuing their unique contribution and making a way for them within the organization.

EI and Visioning. Studies show a correlation between emotional intelligence and effective transformational leader traits of idealized influence and inspirational motivation (Barling et al., 2000; Gardner & Stough, 2002; Hartsfield, 2003; Leban & Zulauf, 2004; Mandell & Pherwani, 2003; Palmer et al., 2001) which appear to be key traits in vision casting. Bass and Avolio (1994) describe inspirational motivation as the leader’s ability to communicate shared vision that inspires followers through purposeful work, meaningful challenges, exciting goals and team spirit. The authors explain idealized influence as living out the vision with followers by sharing risks, role modeling, and considering the needs of followers as the vision is realized. Servant leaders lead by example and participate with followers in establishing and casting the vision.

Greenleaf (1977) describes the servant leader’s foresight and ability to conceptualize in his statement that the leader needs to “have a sense for the unknowable and be able to foresee the unforeseeable” (p. 22). Goleman (1998a) explains empathy as part of this emotional intuition in vision casting in his statement “team leaders must be able to sense and understand the viewpoints of everyone at the table” (p. 99). Goleman shares the story of two managers who faced concern for the future, one gave a gloomy vision that emphasized many would soon be fired. The other spoke honestly about his worry and then promised to keep people informed and treat them fairly. The first manager responded with an anxiety producing vision and his division experienced failure. The other manager shared his vision with empathy and his division remained productive. Empathy, shown to be an important component of leadership (Higgs & Rowland, 2002) as well as emotional
intelligence (Wong & Law, 2002), equips the leader in understanding how to cast vision in a way that transcends personal interests and takes into account individual and organizational needs.

Page and Wong (2000) suggest foresight and vision are established through a strong sense of personal mission, calling and values. Goleman (1998a) explains that emotionally self aware people generally have an understanding of their values and goals, where they are headed and why. An individual leader must have a sense of direction and an ability to stay focused on it in order to show a team or organization the way. Lynch (2001), of the Disney Institute, asserts that the purpose of a leader’s vision is to create shared purpose, inspire interest and passion, guide individual and organizational decision-making, and convey values. Servant leaders’ awareness of their own and others’ emotions bring the capability to transcend their own personal interests in developing and pursuing the vision. Winston (2003) suggests that servant leaders support followers in finding their purpose and inspire them toward it. Nanus (1992) proposes that vision attracts and energizes people, creates meaning in the lives of organizational members, establishes standards, creates a bridge from the present to the future, and induces change. Emotional intelligence guides servant leaders in establishing a direction that followers can also experience as fulfilling.

Goleman (1998a) states “social skill allows leaders to put their emotional intelligence to work” in that the leader’s job is to get work done through people and social skills make that possible (p. 100). Goleman explains that social skill persuades others to respond to leadership through influence, communication that is inclusive of listening and convincing messages, inspiration and guidance, initiating and managing change, building networks of instrumental relationships, collaborating and cooperating toward shared goals, and creating team synergy in pursuing collective goals. Emotional intelligence provides social skills that enable leaders to communicate vision in a way that reaches followers within the organization.

Greenstein (2002) offers an example of EI’s impact on vision casting in contrasting two presidential situations. He explains President George W. Bush’s response to the horrific 9-11 episode “In the chaotic first day of the episode, he came across to some observers as being less than fully confident. But from then on, he radiated a sense of self – assurance and calm determination” (p. 391). Bush worked through his own emotions about the situation and then considered the nation’s need for emotional strength and support. He contrasts Bush’s EI with Richard Nixon’s EI in the 1970 events that led to the killing of four Kent State University student protestors. Greenstein explains that Nixon ignored advice, chose to confrontationally address the issue, and referred to the student protestors as “bums” which led to increased campus antiwar protests and demonstrations in Washington. In this situation, emotional intelligence impacted the way in which U.S. citizens responded to the president’s vision in the midst of crisis.

EI and Servant Leadership Culture. Ashforth and Humphrey (1995) explain that “although the experience of work is saturated with emotion, research has generally neglected the impact of everyday emotions on organizational life” (p. 97). Goleman (1998a) explains the impact of EI on the leader and organizational in his statement:

I want to push the importance of self-regulation to leadership even further and make the case that it enhances integrity, which is not only a personal virtue but also an organizational strength. Many of the bad things that happen in companies are a function of impulsive behavior. People rarely plan to exaggerate profits, pad expense accounts, dip into the till, or abuse power for selfish ends, instead, an opportunity presents itself, and people with low impulse control just say yes (p. 97)

EI increases the servant leader’s capacity to create a virtuous organizational culture which is the result of true servant leadership. Cherniss and Goleman (2001) add that EI influences organizational effectiveness through employee recruitment and retention, empowering and developing employees, teamwork, innovation and creativity, productivity and efficiency, service quality and customer loyalty, and greater employee moral and health.

Goleman (2001) suggests that the emotional intelligence skill of empathy plays a key role in serving others. Goleman explains that the ability to identify another’s stated or unstated need and match it to the appropriate product or service is an empathic strategy that leads to success. At American Express (Hays,
financial planners trained in emotional intelligence outperformed those who had not been trained. In addition, management advisors grew their business by 18.1% over untrained associates. Almost 90% of employees at American Express reported that the training was important and relevant to their jobs, and 50% claimed the training had a significant impact on business. Bardzil and Slaski (2003) reviewed the research to propose that higher emotional intelligence could facilitate conditions for a positive climate of service to emerge from within organizations. Varca (2004) described emotional intelligence as a competency for effective service workers. Thus EI appears to positively impact the service culture of the organization.

Laub (1999) developed the Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA) to measure servant leadership culture from the perspective of the workforce within the organization. According to Laub, the six primary features of a servant leadership culture include valuing people, developing people, building community, displaying authenticity, providing leadership, and sharing leadership. Laub proposes that organizations can create a healthy, servant minded culture that will maximize the best of their workforce and leadership.

Servant leadership behaviors and OLA. Page and Wong (2000) propose service, empowerment and vision casting as key traits of servant leaders’ behavior. In addition, Dennis and Winston (2003) conducted a factor analysis of Page and Wong’s instrument that confirmed the same three variables with Cronbach alpha measures of .94 for service, .89 for empowerment, and .97 for vision casting. Because the subscales were highly correlated in this analysis, the factors were combined into one with a Cronbach alpha of 97. The questions derived from the factor analytical study performed by Dennis and Winston were utilized as the items making up servant leadership behaviors in this study. Laub proposes servant leaders perform these functions in order to develop a culture of servant leadership: (a) value people by believing in them, listening to them and serving their needs before his or her own; (b) develop people through modeling, empowerment, encouragement and affirmation; (c) build community by valuing differences, building strong relationships and working collaboratively; (d) display authenticity through openness, accountability, integrity, trust, and a willingness to learn from others; (e) provide leadership through vision, initiative and goal clarification; and (f) share leadership by facilitating a shared vision, sharing power and status, and promoting others. Laub’s six primary features of servant leadership culture are highly inclusive of Page and Wong’s servant leadership behaviors of service, empowerment and visioning. While servant leadership behaviors contribute to the servant leadership culture of an organization, it is the belief of this author that EI also contributes directly to the servant leadership culture of an organization.

Method

Sample

Respondents were from two mid-western organizations. One was a large church (n=41) and the other a seminary within a large university (n=47). Both organizations are similar in terms of size of their staff which was important in using and comparing the results of the OLA which measures servant leadership culture. Each of the staff and faculty of these organizations were requested by their leadership to participate in the on-line survey that contained the items related to EI, servant leadership behaviors and the OLA. Regular updates were sent to non respondents requesting their participation. Participants were asked to rate their own level of EI, rate the servant leadership behaviors of their supervisors, and rate their perception of the culture of servant leadership. Respondents, which were assured of confidentiality, were required to fill in their telephone extensions and the extensions of their supervisors in order that supervisor EI could be matched with followers’ perception of servant leadership behaviors. Participants were also required to identify their role within the organization in terms of top leader (1), manager/supervisor (2) or workforce employee (3). If a supervisor did not participate, the mean average of all the leaders’ and managers’ EI scores for that organization was used. In calculating the OLA, Laub suggests averaging the responses of the workforce and excluding the top leaders’ and managers’ scores. Thus the OLA score for each organization was calculated using this method.

Measures

Demographic variable. Participants were asked to fill in their age, level of education, length of service at the organization, gender, and role. Each organization was coded individually in order to allow the data to be analyzed separately if significant differences were revealed between the organizations. The appendix shows the entire questionnaire used in this research.
Emotional intelligence. Wong and Law (2002) developed and validated a 16-item measure of EI, which was chosen for this research. Wong and Law intended to construct an EI measure that was practical, short and psychometrically sound. In order to keep the total responses in this study to 100 and the response time to 15 to 20 minutes, it was decided to use a practical and shorter measure for EI. The EI Scale measures four dimensions of emotional which include self-emotion appraisal (SEA), others’ emotion appraisal (OEA), uses of emotion (UOE), and regulation of emotion (ROE). Four items are used to measure each dimension. Each item is rated on a 7-point Likert Scale with response options ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Participants were asked to respond in terms of their own evaluation of their emotional intelligence in each of the 4 subscales. During Wong and Law’s initial study, the results showed acceptable internal reliabilities ranging from .83 to .90 for the 4 subscales making up the instrument and discriminate validity with personality as measured by the Big Five. During an investigation of EI and transformational leadership behaviors, Hartsfield (2003) found the EI scale to have a Cronbach Alpha of .88 and extracted the same four factors during confirmatory factor analysis of the Wong and Law instrument. During this investigation, the Cronbach measures were .81 (SEA), .81 (OEA), .73 (UOE), and .86 (ROE) which reveals good consistency with this EI instrument.

Servant Leadership behaviors. Page and Wong (2000) developed a conceptual model of servant leadership by categorizing 200 items describing servant leadership into 100 attributes and then into 12 subscales. Page and Wong’s initial factor analysis supported the three variables of service, empowerment and visioning. In addition, Dennis and Winston (2003) conducted a factor analysis of Page and Wong’s instrument that confirmed the same three variables with Cronbach alpha measure of .94 for service, .89 for empowerment, and .97 for vision casting. The questions derived from the factor analytical study performed by Dennis and Winston will be utilized as the items making up servant leadership behaviors in this study. Each item is rated on a 7-point Likert Scale with response options ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Participants were asked to respond to the questions in terms of their perception of their supervisors exhibiting each of the 3 servant leadership behaviors. While similar reliabilities were found for each of the scales, this study found the scales to be highly correlated. Thus the items were lumped into one scale referred to as servant leadership behaviors which came out with a Cronbach alpha of .97. There is a need for continued research and development of a reliable and valid measure for servant leadership.

Organizational leadership assessment (OLA). Laub (1999) developed the Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA) to answer three organizational questions about servant leadership: (a) How is servant leadership defined, (b) What are the characteristics of servant leadership, and (c) Can the presence of these characteristics within organizations be assessed through a written instrument? Laub conducted a Delphi investigation into the fundamental characteristics of servant leadership which led to the discovery of a two factor solution. Laub uses the six key components of the OLA primarily as teaching mechanisms in consulting with the OLA. Participants in this study were asked to rate each item in terms of their perception of the servant leadership culture of their organization. Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert Scale with response options ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” The OLA was administered to over 800 individuals in 41 organizations during Laub’s initial research. Through development of the instrument, field testing and factor analysis, Laub reduced the instrument down to 60 items which had a Cronbach Alpha of .98. During this research, the same reliability measure was found.

Results

Correlation Matrix

The two organizations surveyed appear to have significant differences. Organization 1 has a higher education level and supervisor self emotional appraisal (SUP SEA) score among participants. Organization 2 has a higher OLA score, supervisor other emotional appraisal (SUP OEA) score, and supervisor regulation of emotion (SUP ROE) score among participants. Table 1 displays the correlations among the demographic variables, EI dimensions, servant leadership behaviors (SL TOT) and servant leadership culture (OLA). Supervisor use of emotion (SUP UOE) and SUP ROE have a low correlation with OLA score while follower perception of servant leadership behaviors (SL TOT) is moderately correlated with OLA score. Age has a low inverse correlation with SUP SEA and low positive correlation with SUP UOE, which suggests that older
supervisors claim lower emotional awareness and greater use of emotions. Lastly, SUP SEA and SUP OEA have a low correlation with SL TOT.

Table 1
Correlations

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>OLA</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>.251**</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>-.062</th>
<th>.290</th>
<th>Length of Service</th>
<th>.086</th>
<th>.544**</th>
<th>.192*</th>
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<td></td>
<td>-.160</td>
<td>-.070</td>
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<td>-.030</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>-.493</td>
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<td>-.064</td>
<td>-.058</td>
<td>-.094</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>.328</td>
<td>.248**</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.099</td>
<td>.050</td>
<td>.168</td>
<td>.136</td>
<td>-.053</td>
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<td>.021</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td>-.031</td>
<td>-.214</td>
<td>.171</td>
<td>.258**</td>
<td>.373**</td>
<td>.423**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL TOT</td>
<td>.548**</td>
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<td>-.011</td>
<td>-.031</td>
<td>-.048</td>
<td>-.126</td>
<td>.045</td>
<td>.175*</td>
<td>.226*</td>
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*p ≤ .05. **p ≤ .01

Regression Analyses

Supervisor emotional intelligence (SUP SEA, SUP OEA, SUP UOE, SUP ROE) as a predictor of follower perception of servant leadership behavior (SL TOT). The results from testing the relationship between the 4 subscales of EI and follower perception of servant leadership behavior are shown in table 2. After controlling for organization, gender, length of service, education, age, and role (step 1), the EI variables explained an additional 8.6% of the variance (change R squared = .086, change F = 1.941, ns). None of the individual demographic controls was found to be significant at step 1. When the EI variables were entered in at step 2, age (B = .025, β = .263, p < .05) became significant and role (B = -.426, β = -.257, p < .10) was moderately significant. Thus, increases in age positively predict follower perception of servant leadership behaviors and the workforce perceives less servant leaders behaviors in supervisors than top leaders perceive in their supervisors. However, the proposition that supervisor EI predicts follower perception of servant leadership behaviors in supervisors was not supported in this analysis.
Table 2
Regression Results for Supervisor EI and Servant Leadership Behaviors

<table>
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<th>Model</th>
<th>ΔR²</th>
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<th>β</th>
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<tr>
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a Predictors: (Constant), Organization, Gender, Length of Service, Education, Age, Role
b Predictors: (Constant), Organization, Gender, Length of Service, Education, Age, Role, SUP ROE, SUP OEA, SUP UOE, SUP SEA
*p ≤ .10. **p ≤ .05. ***p ≤ .01.

Emotional intelligence (SUP SEA, SUP OEA, SUP UOE, SUP ROE) as a predictor of servant leadership culture (OLA). The results from testing the relationship between the 4 subscales of EI and OLA score are shown in table 3. In controlling for organization, gender, length of service, education, age, and role (step 1), the demographic controls explained 15.9% of the variance (change R squared = .159, change F = 2.941, significant F change = .026). When the demographic controls were entered in at step 1, organization (B = .280, β = .256, p < .05) became significant. Thus followers perceive higher levels of servant leadership behaviors in supervisors in organization 2. The EI variables (step 2) explained 4.1% of the variance (change R squared = .041, change F = .978, ns). Thus the proposition that supervisor EI predicts workforce perception of servant leadership culture was not supported in this analysis. Organization remained significant when the EI variables were entered in at step 2 (B = .305, β = .278, p < .05).

Follower perception of servant leadership behavior (SL TOT) as a predictor of servant leadership culture (OLA). The results from testing the relationship between follower perception of servant leadership behaviors in supervisors and OLA score are also shown in table 3. Follower perception of servant leadership behaviors explained 27.5% of the variance (change R squared = .275, change F = 39.847, significant F change = .000). Thus the proposition that followers’ perception of servant leadership behaviors in supervisors predict the workforce’s perception of servant leadership culture is supported. When SUP TOT was entered in at step 3, gender (B = -.194, β = -.175, p = .054), SUP OEA (B = -.189, β = -.221, p < .05), and SL TOT (B = .291, β = .568, p = .000) became significant. SUP UOE (B = .171, β = .172, p < .10) was moderately significant. Supervisor use of emotions moderately predicted perception of servant leadership culture. Supervisors’ emotional appraisal of others was a negative predictor of workforce perception of servant leadership culture. Women tended to perceive less of a culture of servant leadership in the organizations. Perception of servant
leadership behaviors in supervisors was the most significant predictor of perception of servant leadership culture.

Table 3
Regression Results for EI, Servant Leadership Behaviors, and Servant Leadership Culture

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a Predictors: (Constant), Organization, Gender, Length of Service, Education, Age, Role
b Predictors: (Constant), Organization, Gender, Length of Service, Education, Age, Role, SUP ROE, SUP OEA, SUP UOE, SUP SEA
c Predictors: (Constant), Organization, Gender, Length of Service, Education, Age, Role, SUP ROE, SUP OEA, SUP UOE, SUP SEA, SL TOT
*p≤.10. **p≤.05. ***p≤.01.

Discussion
The findings in this study yield a number of important implications that require further discussion. First, follower perception of servant leadership behaviors from supervisors is a highly significant predictor of perception of servant leadership culture on the part of the workforce. As employees perceive their supervisors to serve, empower and cast vision to them, they will be more likely to experience the organization as one of servant leadership. As leaders look out for the interests of followers and the organization over personal interests, facilitate a mutual sharing of responsibility and power with followers, and include followers’ feedback in developing the vision, it is more likely followers will perceive the leader and culture as servant oriented as defined by Laub (1999) through valuing and developing people, building relational and authentic community, and providing and sharing leadership. While it has been implied in the literature that EI impacts servant leadership, the findings in this study suggest the need for continued research.

While this study did not find support for the initial portion of the model, that EI predicts servant leadership behaviors and culture, the findings about EI are worth noting. SUP SEA and SUP OEA had a low correlation with SL TOT, which shows some relationship between EI and follower perception of servant leadership behaviors. When SUP TOT was entered into the regression model as step 3 with OLA as the dependent variable, two of the EI subscales became significant. SUP OEA was found to be a negative predictor of workforce perception of servant leadership culture. Did supervisors in these two organizations overrate their perception of their ability to appraise the emotions of others? Do these supervisors have less of an understanding of the emotions of others than they perceive? Or did supervisors accurately rate themselves lower in this area? Since servant leadership takes into account followers’ feelings and how to best serve followers (Greenleaf, 1977; Page & Wong, 2000) and EI influences leaders to consider others (Barling et al., 2000; Carmeli, 2003; Gardner & Stough, 2002; Hartsfield, 2003; Mandell & Pherwani, 2003; Palmer et al., 2001; Schutte et al., 2001), it would appear that some relationship between EI and servant leadership behaviors exists. It would also appear that the ability to appropriately appraise the emotions of others would be extremely vital to servant leadership. Is it possible that these results are cautioning servant leaders against overstating their ability to appraise the emotions of followers? This question requires further research. Also, adding in a social desirability scale to assess participants’ over appraisal of their own abilities may be important to future research.

Supervisors who bring the ability to utilize emotions well were also perceived by the workforce as creating a culture of servant leadership. Regulation of emotions on the part of supervisors had a low correlation with OLA score. Kellet, Humphrey, and Sleeth (2002) found empathy, a vital aspect of EI, to be a predictor of perception of leadership. Thus these initial findings that suggest the impact of supervisor EI on perception of servant leadership behavior and culture need further research and investigation.

Several interesting findings with the demographic controls are worth noting. When the demographic controls, EI variables and SL TOT were entered into the model, gender became significant. With that model in place, women were less likely to perceive cultures of servant leadership in these organizations. This finding may be reflective of the tendency of Christian organizations to limit female roles due to interpretation of several passages of the Bible that appear to speak more to the culture of the time rather than about principles that transcend cultures. It appears both Godly and wise to value women as equal partners in the organizational mission through empowering them, including their input in the vision, and serving their interests as part of serving the greater good. Organizations that place less value on the perception of a specific group of followers, whether for gender or other reasons, really are less likely to be perceived as culture of servanthood by those followers.

Age also had an impact on perception of culture in several areas. Older participants tended to see the culture as one of servanthood. If most organizations have been programmed to think more rationally and cognitively and employees have been expected to leave their emotions at home, older employees may have fewer expectations of service or of having their feelings taken into account. The lack of expectation may be more likely to influence older employees to see the culture as one of servanthood. However, younger employees may be more likely to bring their emotions to work and expect the organization to take their feelings into account. One potential concern is that age also had a low inverse relationship with SUP SEA which suggests that older supervisors will be less likely to be emotionally aware. Also, age had a low positive correlation with SUP UOE. While this result proposes that older supervisors may be more likely to use their emotions well at work, if employees have been expected to not bring emotions to work, older employees may
not really understand how to use emotions at work as much as they think they do. Could these findings suggest some potential gaps in generational expectations and experiences in organizations?

While this study offers several contributions to the literature on EI and servant leadership, it is not without limitations. Both of the organizations in this study were Christian so the findings may be biased based upon religious preferences which impact the external validity. These findings should be investigated in other organizations so that the results can be generalized. Some participants may not have responded due to concern over providing their extensions which could have imposed on confidentiality with the results. In addition, the measurements for EI and servant leadership are new and continuing to be investigated and improved. As more valid and reliable instruments for measuring these variables are available, they should be incorporated in the research design. Lastly, while the sample represented in each of the two organizations (n=47 and n=41) is significant given the staff size of each organization (ranging in the 50s), the total sample size (n=88) is low. Thus, further research incorporating these suggestions is needed to examine these findings in other organizational contexts.
References


Appendix

Emotional Intelligence and Servant Leadership Survey

This survey is part of a research project looking at the relationship of emotional intelligence to servant leadership behaviors and the impact of that on servant leadership culture.

Contact:

Jeanine Parolini
Voice: 651-483-3600 ext. 107
email: jeanpar@regent.edu
Jeanine.Parolini@nhlc.org

Demographic Information

Please tell us about yourself. All information is strictly confidential and no individual information will be published. Note: for age and years worked, round to nearest whole number.

What is your age?

What is the highest level of education you have completed?
   Less than High School
   High School/GED
   Some College
   2-Year College Degree (Associates)
   4-Year College Degree (BA, BS)
   Master's Degree
   Doctoral Degree Professional Degree (DD, MD, JD)

How many years have you worked for this organization?

What is your gender?
   Male
   Female

Indicate your present role/position in the organization.
   1 - Top Leadership (top level of leadership)
   2 - Management (supervisor, manager)
   3 - Workforce (staff, faculty, or employee who does not supervise anyone)

For coding purposes, enter your phone extension

For coding purposes, enter your immediate supervisor's phone extension

Note: for phone extensions, type numbers only.

Section 1

For each of the following statements, choose the response that best indicates the extent of your agreement or disagreement as it describes you.

(1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Moderately Disagree, 4-Neither Agree or Disagree, 5-Moderately Agree, 6-Agree, 7-Strongly Agree )

Self emotional appraisal (SEA)
I have a good sense of why I have certain feelings most of the time.
I have a good understanding of my own emotions.
I really understand what I feel.
I always know whether or not I am happy.

Others emotional appraisal (OEA)
I always know my friends' emotions from their behavior.
I am a good observer of others' emotions.
I am sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others.
I have good understanding of the emotions of people around me.

Use of emotions (UOE)
I always set goals for myself and then try my best to achieve them.
I always tell myself I am a competent person.
I am a self-motivated person.
I would always encourage myself to try my best.

Regulation of emotions (ROE)
I am able to control my temper and handle difficulties rationally.
I am quite capable of controlling my own emotions.
I can always calm down quickly when I am very angry.
I have good control of my own emotions.

Section 2
For each of the following statements, choose the response that best indicates the extent of your agreement or disagreement as it describes your supervisor.

My immediate supervisor is...
(1-Strongly Disagree, 2, 3, 4-Undecided, 5, 6, 7-Strongly Agree)

Empowerment
Actively seeking ways to utilize people's differences as a contribution to the group
Valuing everyone on his or her team
Very forgiving when others make a mistake and helping them learn from their mistakes
Setting clear and realistic goals
Usually coming up with solutions accepted by others as helpful and effective
Deriving satisfaction from bringing out the best in others
Modeling for others how everyone can improve the process of production
Willing to have his or her ideas challenged
Not asking anyone to do what he or she is unwilling to do
Willing to share his or her power and authority with others

Section 3
For each of the following statements, choose the response that best indicates the extent of your agreement or disagreement as it describes your supervisor.

My immediate supervisor is...
(1-Strongly disagree, 2, 3, 4-Undecided, 5, 6, 7-Strongly agree)

Service
Not seeking recognition or rewards in serving others
Able to learn from subordinates whom he or she serves
Willing to make personal sacrifices in serving others
Seeking to serve rather than be served
Committed to the concept that leadership is more of a responsibility than a position

My immediate supervisor is...
Vision
Motivated by a higher sense of calling
Driven by values that transcend self-interests and material success
Supportive of the belief that every organization needs a higher purpose
Able to articulate a clear sense of purpose and direction for his or her organization's future
Aware of what he or she wants his or her organization to become or do for society
Able to inspire others with his or her enthusiasm and confidence for what can be accomplished
Very focused and disciplined at work
Leading by example

Section 4
The purpose of this next instrument is to allow organizations to discover how their leadership practices and beliefs impact the different ways people function within the organization. This instrument is designed to be taken by people at all levels of the organization including workers, managers and top leadership. As you respond to the different statements, please answer as to what you believe is generally true about your organization or work unit. Please respond with your own personal feelings and beliefs and not those of others, or those that others would want you to have. Respond as to how things are ... not as they could be, or should be.

Feel free to use the full spectrum of answers (from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree). You will find that some of the statements will be easy to respond to while others may require more thought. If you are uncertain, you may want to answer with your first, intuitive response. Please be honest and candid. The response we seek is the one that most closely represents your feelings or beliefs about the statement that is being considered.

There are three different sections to this instrument. Carefully read the brief instructions that are given prior to each section. Your involvement in this assessment is anonymous and confidential.

In this section, please respond to each statement as you believe it applies to the entire organization (or organizational unit) including workers, managers/supervisors and top leadership.

(1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Undecided, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly Agree)

Trust each other
Are clear on the key goals of the organization
Are non-judgmental – they keep an open mind
Respect each other
Know where this organization is headed in the future
Maintain high ethical standards
Work well together in teams
Value differences in culture, race & ethnicity
Are caring & compassionate towards each other
Demonstrate high integrity & honesty
Are trustworthy
Relate well to each other
 Attempt to work with others more than working on their own
Are held accountable for reaching work goals
Are aware of the needs of others
Allow for individuality of style and expression
Are encouraged by supervisors to share in making important decisions
Work to maintain positive working relationships
Accept people as they are
View conflict as an opportunity to learn & grow
Know how to get along with people
Section 5

In this next section, please respond to each statement as you believe it applies to the leadership of the organization (or organizational unit) including managers/supervisors and top leadership.

Managers/Supervisors and Top Leadership in this Organization...
(1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Undecided, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly Agree)

- Communicate a clear vision of the future of the organization
- Are open to learning from those who are below them in the organization
- Allow workers to help determine where this organization is headed
- Work alongside the workers instead of separate from them
- Use persuasion to influence others instead of coercion or force
- Don’t hesitate to provide the leadership that is needed
- Promote open communication and sharing of information
- Give workers the power to make important decisions
- Provide the support and resources needed to help workers meet their goals
- Create an environment that encourages learning
- Are open to receiving criticism & challenge from others
- Say what they mean, and mean what they say
- Encourage each person to exercise leadership
- Admit personal limitations & mistakes
- Encourage people to take risks even if they may fail
- Practice the same behavior they expect from others
- Facilitate the building of community & team
- Do not demand special recognition for being leaders
- Lead by example by modeling appropriate behavior
- Seek to influence others from a positive relationship rather than from the authority of their position
- Provide opportunities for all workers to develop to their full potential
- Honestly evaluate themselves before seeking to evaluate others
- Use their power and authority to benefit the workers
- Take appropriate action when it is needed
- Build people up through encouragement and affirmation
- Encourage workers to work together rather than competing against each other
- Are humble – they do not promote themselves
- Communicate clear plans & goals for the organization
- Provide mentor relationships in order to help people grow professionally
- Are accountable & responsible to others
- Are receptive listeners
- Do not seek after special status or the “perks” of leadership
- Put the needs of the workers ahead of their own

Section 6

In this next section, please respond to each statement as you believe it is true about you personally and your role in the organization (or organizational unit).

In viewing my own role...
(1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Undecided, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly Agree)

- I feel appreciated by my supervisor for what I contribute
- I am working at a high level of productivity
- I am listened to by those above me in the organization
- I feel good about my contribution to the organization
- I receive encouragement and affirmation from those above me in the organization
My job is important to the success of this organization
I trust the leadership of this organization
I enjoy working in this organization
I am respected by those above me in the organization
I am able to be creative in my job
In this organization, a person’s work is valued more than their title
I am able to use my best gifts and abilities in my job

Resources:
Emotional Intelligence Scale by Wong and Law
Servant Leadership Behaviors of Empowerment, Service and Vision by Page & Wong
Organizational Leadership Assessment by Laub