



Self-Perceived Servant Leadership Characteristics: Testing for Differences in Citadel Cadets

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The Servant Leadership Survey (SLS) offers a valid, reliable, empirically proven instrument that accurately measures servant leadership at both the individual and organizational levels. However, in organizations that focus on developing leaders through a formal, multi-stage process, some emerging leaders might not have assigned followers until a year or more in the program. This program characteristic presents a significant challenge from the perspective of assessing and measuring a student's progress along the leader developmental pathway. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to adapt and validate the SLS for self-assessment. While the results provide an indication of the differences in self-perceived leadership characteristics by cadets at The Citadel, the adapted SLS did not align well with the original instrument. Nevertheless, the insight derived from this study will facilitate the next steps required to validate a self-assessment instrument eventually which could provide the necessary data to adjust the overall academic and experiential program to be more effective and offer the individual-specific information to facilitate counseling and personal leadership development for every student in the program.

Introduced in 2011, the Servant Leadership Survey (SLS) developed by Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) offers a valid, reliable, empirically proven instrument that accurately measures servant leadership at both the individual and organizational levels. Building on the theory first introduced by Greenleaf (1970) more than forty-five years ago, the SLS provides a useful assessment tool for leader development and serves a critical role in the ongoing research of servant leadership theory and leadership in general.

Research Problem

By design, the SLS enables followers to evaluate a leader, which is useful; however, in organizations that focus on developing leaders through a formal, multi-stage process,

some emerging leaders might not have assigned followers until a year or more in the program. The Citadel, the Military College of South Carolina, focuses on educating and developing principled leaders “in a disciplined and intellectually challenging environment” using a four-year, staged process (“The Citadel mission statement,” 2018). However, in this environment, emerging leaders do not have a formal leadership position until the second year, at the earliest, and might not have one until the third, or even fourth year of the program. This program characteristic presents a significant challenge from the perspective of assessment and measurement of a student’s progress along the leadership developmental pathway.

Statement of Purpose

Given the reliability and successful validation of the SLS instrument, which was designed for followers to evaluate a leader, the purpose of this study was to adapt and validate the SLS for self-assessment.

Significance of the Study

The successful adaptation of the SLS for self-assessment would mark a significant milestone in leadership development and assessment at The Citadel and adult leader development, in general. The Citadel is a unique college environment where cadets live and study in a very structured, military-like environment. While the college has developed leaders for its entire 175 years of existence, there has never been a standard way to measure that development. In other words, absent a standardized measurement tool, assessment of leadership development, at both the individual and organizational levels, has been subjective and anecdotal at best. This study, if successful, would provide program-level feedback for improvement and offer every student individual feedback on his or her leader development throughout the four-year process. Moreover, this study would also enhance the existing body of knowledge on servant leadership and leadership development, in general.

Literature Review

The literature review served to identify the theoretical foundation for the factors in the SLS. Many researchers have noted that the absence of widely accepted, formal definition for servant leadership has posed one of the most significant challenges in developing and implementing servant leadership theory (Laub, 1999; Russell & Stone, 2002; Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Greenleaf (1970) did, however, provide a description that is generally accepted as the theoretical basis: “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” (p. 15). The crucial difference between servant leadership and other positive or constructive leadership theories deals with the primary intent of the leader: the servant leader focuses on followers – first,

foremost, always – not the organizational mission and not the organization. Servant leaders succeed when their followers succeed. The result is a powerful, flexible form of leadership.

Key Characteristics of Servant Leadership

Van Dierendonck (2011) recognized four servant leadership models that stand out as being particularly influential: Spears (1995), Laub (1999), Russell and Stone (2002), and Patterson (2003). Spears (1995) specified 10 characteristics of a servant leader: (a) listening, (b) empathizing, (c) healing, (d) awareness, (e) persuasion, (f) conceptualization, (g) foresight, (h) stewardship, (i) commitment, and (j) community building (pp. 4-7). Building on his work, Laub (1999) published the Servant Organizational Leadership Assessment (SOLA) instrument, measuring organizational-level servant leadership by focusing on six characteristic clusters: (a) values people, (b) develops peoples, (c) builds community, (d) displays authenticity, (e) provides leadership, and (f) shares leadership (p. 83). The final version for a servant organization presented by Laub (1999) specified these six clusters plus 18 supporting behaviors.

Observing the increasing acceptance of servant leadership, despite the absence of a formal definition, Russell and Stone (2002) endeavored to create a baseline framework that would serve as a point of departure for future research. After an extensive literature review, they identified nine functional attributes and 11 accompanying servant leader attributes. The functional attributes included: (a) vision, (b) honesty, (c) integrity, (d) trust, (e) service, (f) modeling, (g) pioneering, (h) appreciation of others, and (i) empowerment, and the accompanying attributes included: (a) communication, (b) credibility, (c) competence, (d) stewardship, (e) visibility, (f) influence, (g) persuasion, (h) listening, (i) encouragement, (j) teaching, and (k) delegation (p. 147).

Finally, Patterson (2003) filled perceived gaps in the research by adding dimensions that had not yet been considered, to include love, humility, and altruism. Her model included seven factors: (a) agapao love, (b) humility, (c) altruism, (d) vision, (e) trust, (f) empowerment, and (g) service (p. 11). These characteristics focus on important virtues related to service but do not openly identify the leadership aspects inherently related to servant leadership.

SLS Concepts

Building on this body of research, Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) contributed the SLS that included the following eight dimensions of a servant leader: (a) empowerment, (b) accountability, (c) standing back, (d) humility, (e) authenticity, (f) courage, (g) forgiveness, and (h) stewardship (pp. 251-252).

Empowerment. Empowerment involves giving power and authority to followers to make decisions. Conger (2000) explained that empowerment serves as a motivational leadership component that both enables subordinates and encourages individual development. Konczak, Stelly, and Trusty (2000) added that empowerment essentially redistributes power, resulting in an individual's recognition of the worth in his or her work, to include (a) meaning (i.e., value), (b) competence (i.e., effectiveness), (c) self-determination (i.e., choice), and (d) impact (i.e., significance). Greenleaf (2002) indicated that a controlling, low-trust culture would never compete with the speed, agility, and innovative capability of an organization that empowers its people. Moreover, Greenleaf (1998) emphasized that recognizing an individual's intrinsic value and potential is an antecedent to empowerment.

Accountability. Froiland, Gordon, and Picard (1993) observed that many companies recognize the importance of accountability but do not exercise it. They added that very few people feel that they are held accountable for their assigned jobs, so accountability bolsters both individuals and organizations. Conger (1989) explained that accountability is related to actions followers can control, and Konczak et al. (2000) pointed out that this entails both individual followers as well as organizational teams.

Standing Back. Standing back acknowledges team members first and gives their interests the priority (Greenleaf, 2002). It also involves giving subordinates credit when individual followers and the organization achieve success (Collins, 2001).

Humility. Humility allows a servant leader to maintain a balanced perspective of his or her talent, skills, and achievements (Patterson, 2003). It also involves being honest and transparent with one's shortcomings and mistakes (Collins, 2001; Morris, Brotheridge, & Urbanski, 2005). Morris et al. (2005) explained that humility leads to better relations and improved motivation and participation in followers.

Authenticity. Authenticity involves consistency with one's feelings and thoughts (Harter, 2002). It is related to truth and integrity by providing a balance between internal/external, public/private thoughts, words, and deeds (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Halpin and Croft (1966) suggested that authenticity ensures that one's professional role does not mask individuality.

Courage. Greenleaf (1970) observed that a servant leader willingly accepts risk knowing that it may lead to success or failure and may involve uncertainty and danger. This willingness becomes a differentiating trait of a servant leader. Hernandez (2008) explained that courage involves (a) choice, (b) risk, (c) assessment, and (d) action. As such, courage involves freedom of choice based on a rational decision with an awareness of a genuine threat (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Finally, servant leaders base actions on convictions and values (Russell & Stone, 2002).

Forgiveness. Forgiveness relates to being empathetic. George (2000) explained that this involves (a) appraising and expressing emotions, (b) using emotional awareness to empower cognitive processes, (c) making decisions about emotions, and (d) managing emotions. McCullough, Hoyt, and Rachal (2000) stressed that this also involves forgiveness and letting go of past transgressions or breaches of performance. As such, the servant leader creates a trust-based environment where performance-based errors may be forgiven (Ferch, 2003).

Stewardship. Stewardship involves oversight and protection of followers. Hernandez (2008) explained that stewardship promotes individual responsibility and enhances the overall organization. She added that it involves acting in the best interest of followers and the organization and taking responsibility for both individual and group welfare. Stewardship is also related to a leader's love for those under his or her protection and care (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Theoretical Model

The theoretical model that served as the basis for this adaptation was the Servant Leadership Survey (SLS), which is a 30-item instrument published by Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) (see Appendix, Table A1). Built on existing research and developed through a phased, multi-study analysis and validation effort across two countries, the SLS represents one of the most recent measures for servant leadership, offering an essential tool for individual and organizational leader development.

SLS Developmental Study 1. Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) employed a web-based questionnaire (99 items) during the first developmental study completed by four sample groups in the Netherlands ($n = 668$). They developed the first set of items that contained primarily new items but also included existing items for measuring empowerment developed by Konczak et al. (2000). Multi-stage factor analysis narrowed the set from 99 to 28 items in six dimensions: (a) empowerment, (b) accountability, (c) standing back, (d) authenticity, (e) courage, and (f) forgiveness (p. 254). Following analysis, Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) noted that the dimension of humility had disappeared, so they chose to keep the best humility-related items and proceed. Furthermore, they determined that stewardship-related items were inaccurate, so after necessary adjustments, 39 items in the eight dimensions remained.

SLS Developmental Study 2. Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) employed an online survey with the 39 items in the second developmental study, completed in one sample in the Netherlands ($n = 263$). According to Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011), a combination of confirmatory factor analysis and other analysis techniques resulted in reducing the instrument to 30 items in eight dimensions.

SLS Developmental Study 3. Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) again employed an online survey with these 30 items in the third developmental study, completed by a composite sample in the Netherlands (n = 236: 101 from anonymous entries and 135 gas station employees affiliated with one oil company). With results of this study confirming that the 30 items in eight factors, Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) opted to include a cross-cultural study to confirm the instrument's validity.

SLS Developmental Study 4. Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) employed an online study with 30 items, validating the third developmental study, completed in one sample in the United Kingdom (n = 384). They explained that both authors revised the instrument for use in English, which was verified by a professional translator. Results confirmed an eight-dimension model and indicated that forgiveness and accountability demonstrated the most significant deviation from the other factors. Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) explained that forgiveness is limited to occasions when something has not gone as intended, and accountability represents the most robust example of the leader aspect in a servant leader.

Research Questions

The study used 48 research questions designed to identify differences in self-perceived servant leadership characteristics in Citadel cadets. The research question categories were (a) gender (male/female), (b) ethnicity (white/non-white), (c) athlete (yes/no), (d) cadet rank (yes/no), (e) military commissioning (yes/no), and (f) class year (1 through 4).

Gender. The following research questions tested differences based on gender.

RQ1a: *Is there a difference in the empowerment factor by gender?*

RQ1b: *Is there a difference in the accountability factor by gender?*

RQ1c: *Is there a difference in the standing back factor by gender?*

RQ1d: *Is there a difference in the humility factor by gender?*

RQ1e: *Is there a difference in the authenticity factor by gender?*

RQ1f: *Is there a difference in the courage factor by gender?*

RQ1g: *Is there a difference in the forgiveness factor by gender?*

RQ1h: *Is there a difference in the stewardship factor by gender?*

Ethnicity. The following research questions tested differences based on ethnicity.

RQ2a: *Is there a difference in the empowerment factor by ethnicity?*

RQ2b: *Is there a difference in the accountability factor by ethnicity?*

RQ2c: *Is there a difference in the standing back factor by ethnicity?*

RQ2d: *Is there a difference in the humility factor by ethnicity?*

RQ2e: *Is there a difference in the authenticity factor by ethnicity?*

RQ2f: *Is there a difference in the courage factor by ethnicity?*

RQ2g: *Is there a difference in the forgiveness factor by ethnicity?*

RQ2h: *Is there a difference in the stewardship factor by ethnicity?*

Athletic Status. The following research questions tested differences based on athletic status.

RQ3a: *Is there a difference in the empowerment factor for athletes and non-athletes?*

RQ3b: *Is there a difference in the accountability factor for athletes and non-athletes?*

RQ3c: *Is there a difference in the standing back factor for athletes and non-athletes?*

RQ3d: *Is there a difference in the humility factor for athletes and non-athletes?*

RQ3e: *Is there a difference in the authenticity factor for athletes and non-athletes?*

RQ3f: *Is there a difference in the courage factor for athletes and non-athletes?*

RQ3g: *Is there a difference in the forgiveness factor for athletes and non-athletes?*

RQ3h: *Is there a difference in the stewardship factor for athletes and non-athletes?*

Cadet Rank. The following research questions tested differences based on cadet rank.

RQ4a: *Is there a difference in the empowerment factor for cadets with rank and those without?*

RQ4b: *Is there a difference in the accountability factor for cadets with rank and those without?*

RQ4c: *Is there a difference in the standing back factor for cadets with rank and those without?*

RQ4d: *Is there a difference in the humility factor for cadets with rank and those without?*

RQ4e: *Is there a difference in the authenticity factor for cadets with rank and those without?*

RQ4f: *Is there a difference in the courage factor for cadets with rank and those without?*

RQ4g: *Is there a difference in the forgiveness factor for cadets with rank and those without?*

RQ4h: *Is there a difference in the stewardship factor for cadets with rank and those without?*

Commissioning. The following research questions tested differences based on commissioning status.

RQ5a: *Is there a difference in the empowerment factor by military commissioning status?*

RQ5b: *Is there a difference in the accountability factor by military commissioning status?*

RQ5c: *Is there a difference in the standing back factor by military commissioning status?*

RQ5d: *Is there a difference in the humility factor by military commissioning status?*

RQ5e: *Is there a difference in the authenticity factor by military commissioning status?*

RQ5f: *Is there a difference in the courage factor by military commissioning status?*

RQ5g: *Is there a difference in the forgiveness factor by military commissioning status?*

RQ5h: *Is there a difference in the stewardship factor by military commissioning status?*

Cadet Class. The following research questions tested differences based on class year.

RQ6a: *Is there a difference in the empowerment factor by class year?*

RQ6b: *Is there a difference in the accountability factor by class year?*

RQ6c: *Is there a difference in the standing back factor by class year?*

RQ6d: *Is there a difference in the humility factor by class year?*

RQ6e: *Is there a difference in the authenticity factor by class year?*

RQ6f: *Is there a difference in the courage factor by class year?*

RQ6g: *Is there a difference in the forgiveness factor by class year?*

RQ6h: *Is there a difference in the stewardship factor by class year?*

Method

This study used quantitative methods to validate and confirm the reliability of the SLS instrument adapted for self-assessment and answer the research questions.

Research Design

The research data were collected through an online survey questionnaire using Snap Survey software. The electronic link and survey instructions were distributed by email using the institutional email system at The Citadel. Once data collection was complete, the data were assessed using SPSS software to complete the necessary analysis. This report includes a description of the method employed, the analysis results, and a discussion of the successfulness and shortcomings of the study.

Population and Sample

The South Carolina Corps of Cadets (SCCC) at The Citadel represents the population. The SCCC strength on 30 October 2018 was 2430, which is 52 (2.2%) above the college residency capacity of 2378 ("Strength and status report," 2018). According to the 2018 college enrollment profile, demographics included: (a) 91.0% male and 9.0% female; (b) 75.4% white, 8.6% black/ African American, 7.4% Hispanic, 4.6% multi-racial, and 4.0% other; (c) 98.9% U.S. citizen and 1.1% international; and (d) 764 freshmen (fourth class), 591 sophomores (third class), 606 juniors (second class), and 487 seniors (first class) ("The Citadel student enrollment profile: Fall 2018," 2018).

The sample size is a critical part of the research. The adapted version of the SLS required at least five completed questionnaires per questionnaire item to complete factor analysis accurately. Therefore, based on the 30-item adapted instrument, 150 completed questionnaires were needed. The sample for this study included 304 cadets ($n = 304$), which was 12.5% of the SCCC population at the time. In October 2018, 473 cadets were invited through institutional email to take the survey, and 351 cadets (74.2%) responded by submitting a survey. Forty-seven surveys (13.4%) were unusable, to include: (a) 1 (0.3%) where the participant declined to consent without stating a reason, (b) 21 (6.0%) that were incomplete, and (c) 25 (7.0%) where the participant selected the same value for every question, indicating a disingenuous submission. A total of 304 ($n = 304$) usable surveys were received, equating to a 64.3% response rate for valid surveys.

As summarized in Table 1, the sample had 265 men (87.2%) and 39 women (12.8%). The sample included two ethnic groups: (a) white (239, 78.6%) and (b) non-white (65, 21.4%). The sample also included 47 NCAA athletes (15.5%), 101 cadets who held cadet rank (33.2%), and 118 cadets on track to accept a commission in the military (38.8%).

Finally, the sample included 124 freshmen (40.8%), 71 sophomores (23.4%), 63 juniors (20.7%) and 46 seniors (15.1%).

Table 1

Demographic Description of the Sample

Demographic	Category	Frequency	
		(n = 304)	Percent
Gender	Male	265	87.2%
	Female	39	12.8%
Ethnicity	White	239	78.6%
	Non-white	65	21.4%
NCAA Athlete	No	257	84.5%
	Yes	47	15.5%
Cadet Rank	No	203	66.8%
	Yes	101	33.2%
Commissioning	No	186	61.2%
	Yes	118	38.8%
Cadet Class	Fourth Class	124	40.8%
	Third Class	71	23.4%
	Second Class	63	20.7%
	First Class	46	15.1%

Instrumentation

In March 2018, Dr. Van Dierendonck authorized the modification of the SLS for specialized use at The Citadel. The adapted instrumentation was based on the original instrument published by Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011). It included the same 30 items; however, each question was reworded from third-person, designed for leader assessment, to first-person, optimized for self-assessment. The word work was also substituted with the word duties or omitted entirely in six of the questions to more appropriately fit the military environment at The Citadel (see Appendix, Table-A2, Item No. 1, 7, 12, 15, 22, and 26).

Factor structure. Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) confirmed an eight-factor model in 30 items, with the following dimensions: (a) empowerment, (b) accountability,

(c) standing back, (d) humility, (e) authenticity, (f) courage, (g) forgiveness, and (h) stewardship (pp. 255-256).

Reliability. Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) indicated that their 30-item SLS instrument reported good internal consistency for each of the scales, with the following Cronbach's alphas: (a) empowerment (.89), (b) accountability (.81), (c) standing back (.76), (d) humility (.91), (e) authenticity (.82), (f) courage (.69), (g) forgiveness (.72), and (h) stewardship (.74) (pp. 255-256).

Data Collection

The Office of Institutional Research (IR) at The Citadel published the adapted version of the 30-item SLS (see Appendix, Table-A2) using Snap Survey software. The survey included six demographic questions addressing: (a) gender, (b) ethnicity, (c) athletic status, (d) cadet rank, (e) military commissioning status, and (f) cadet class. The survey was open and available for seven working days, and a reminder to take the survey was sent to the participants every day for the last four days if not completed.

To obtain the required 150 questionnaires, one battalion of cadets (i.e., four SCCC companies, 473 cadets total) was invited to take the assessment. The cadets were offered an overnight pass as an incentive if the battalion achieved a 60% response rate to the survey. As previously mentioned, 351 cadets (74.2%) responded by submitting a survey, resulting in 304 ($n = 304$), a 64.3% response rate for valid surveys.

The analysis included confirmatory factor analysis and a comparison of the results to the developmental study 3 results published by Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) to verify (a) eigenvalue > 1 for each factor, (b) scree plot depiction of eight factors, and (c) a-priori criterion satisfied (i.e., eight factors were expected). The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for each factor was also assessed to confirm the reliability of the adapted instrument.

Both the t-test and one-way ANOVA methods were employed to answer the research questions. Williams and Monge (2001) explained that the t-test model assesses the difference and determines significance in two population means based on sample means and distributions. The t-test method was used to analyze the following research questions: (a) RQ1: gender (male/female), (b) RQ2: ethnicity (white/non-white), (c) RQ3: athlete (yes/no), (d) RQ4: rank (yes/no), and (e) RQ5: commissioning (yes/no). Williams and Monge (2001) also indicated that the one-way ANOVA assesses whether a statistically significant difference exists between two or more population means when the sample means indicate different levels on one independent variable. The one-way ANOVA method was used to analyze the remaining research question: RQ6: class year (1 through 4).

Results

The 30-item adapted SLS survey provided the self-perceived servant leadership behaviors in cadets at The Citadel.

Factor Analysis

The factor analysis results included (a) component matrix, (b) eigenvalues, (c) Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients, and (d) scree plot, graphically depicting the factors. Table 2 and Figure 1 summarize the seven servant leadership components that emerged during factor analysis, measured on a Likert scale of 1 to 6 (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree).

Component Matrix. The component matrix with Varimax rotation summarized in Table 2, column 4 displayed seven factors that emerged during the factor reduction process. In order of statistical strength (a) five items loaded on factor-1 (3, 2, 1, 6, 4), (b) four items loaded on factor-2 (18, 30, 10, 19), (c) five items loaded on factor-3 (26, 11, 24, 25, 27), (d) six items loaded on factor-4 (13, 14, 20, 22, 21, 12), (e) four items loaded on factor-5 (9, 29, 28, 17), (f) two items loaded on factor-6 (8, 16), and (g) three items loaded on factor-7 (15, 7, 23). The final item (5) did not load on any of these seven factors.

Eigenvalues. Table 2, column 5 displays the eigenvalues for each of the factors that emerged during the factor reduction process, representing seven factors that had an eigenvalue > 1: (a) 9.83 for factor-1, (b) 2.50 for factor-2, (c) 1.86 for factor-3, (d) 1.37 for factor-4, (e) 1.32 for factor-5, (f) 1.12 for factor-6, and (g) 1.03 for factor-7.

Cronbach's Alpha. Table 2, column 6 summarizes the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the adapted SLS factors: (a) .91 for empowerment (5 items), (b) .79 for humility (4 items), (c) .82 for stewardship (5 items), (d) .80 for accountability (6 items), (e) .70 for authenticity (4 items), (f) .71 for courage (2 items), and (g) .55 for forgiveness (3 items).

Table 2

Factor Analysis Summary for Adapted Self-Assessment Instrument with Varimax Rotation of Servant Leadership Scale Averages

Scale	Mean Score	N of Items	Component Loading Item Numbers ^{b, c}	Total Variance Eigenvalues	Cronbach's Alpha
Empowerment	5.07	5	3, 2, 1, 6, 4	9.83	.91
Humility	5.04	4	18, 30, 10, 19	2.50	.79
Stewardship	4.78	5	26, 11, 24, 25, 27	1.86	.82
Accountability	4.74	6	13, 14, 20, 22, 21, 12	1.37	.80
Authenticity	4.59	4	9, 29, 28, 17	1.32	.70
Courage	4.29	2	8, 16	1.12	.71
Forgiveness	3.24	3	15, 7, 23	1.03	.55
Standing Back ^a	--	--	--	--	--

Note: N = 304. Factors that did not meet generally accepted minimum value of .70 in boldface.

^aStanding Back factor disappeared. ^bItems listed in order of statistical strength. ^cItem-5 did not load on a verified factor.

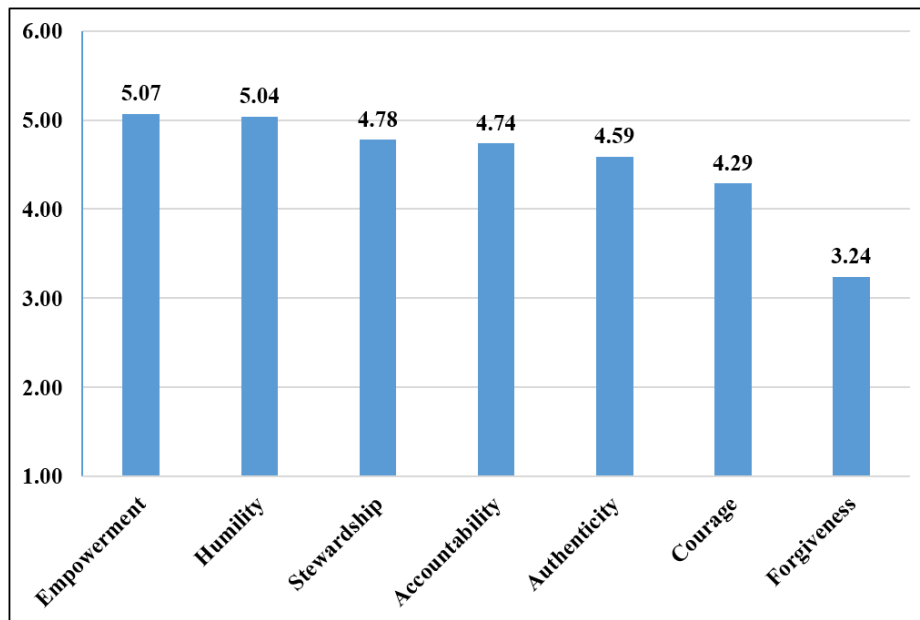


Figure 1. Summary of self-assessed servant leadership factor-average scores.

Scree Plot. Figure 2 displays the scree plot from the factor reduction process, graphically highlighting the seven factors with an eigenvalue > 1, circled.

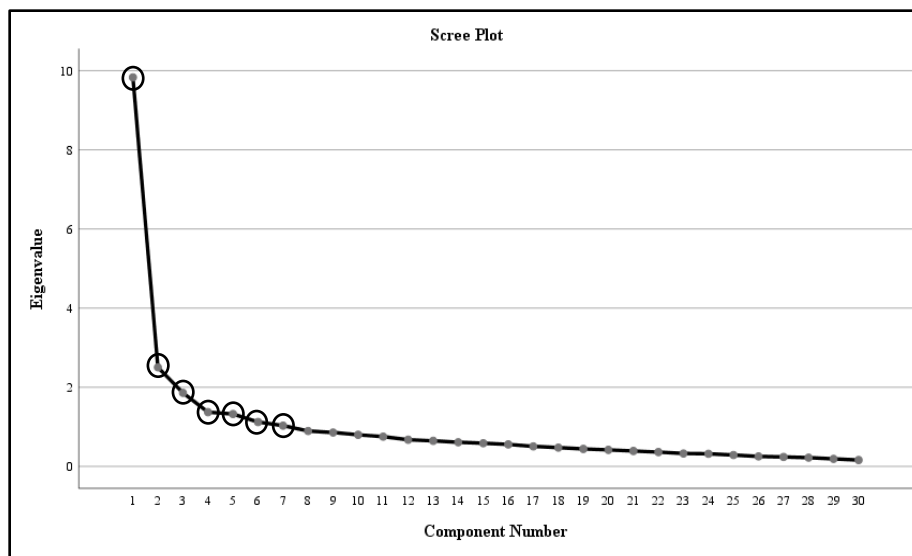


Figure 2. Factor reduction scree plot for adapted SLS, with circled eigenvalues > 1.0.

Research Questions

Forty-eight research questions categorized by demographic factor served to identify differences in self-perceived servant leadership characteristics by Citadel cadets; however, since the standing back factor disappeared during factor analysis, its corresponding questions (RQ1c-6c) were omitted.

Gender. There was no difference in any of the seven adapted SLS factors by gender; therefore, the response to RQ1a through RQ1h is negative.

Ethnicity. There was no difference in six of the seven factors by ethnicity; therefore, the response to RQ2a, RQ2b, and RQ2e through RQ2h is negative (i.e., no difference for empowerment, accountability, authenticity, courage, forgiveness, or stewardship). However, there was a significant difference in RQ2d (humility). As displayed in Table 3, the Levene's test for humility (RQ2d) indicated that $p = .95 > 0.05$; therefore, the null hypothesis of equal variances in the two groups cannot be rejected (i.e., equal variances assumed), so $t(302) = 2.61, p = 0.01 < 0.05$.

Table 3

Independent Samples t-Test for Humility Factor Average Grouped on Ethnicity

Scale	t-test for Equality of Means		
	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Humility	2.61	302	.01

Athletic Status. There was no difference in any of the seven factors by athletic status; therefore, the response to RQ3a through RQ3h is negative.

Cadet Rank. There was no difference in five of the seven factors for cadets with rank; therefore, the response to RQ4d through RQ4h is negative (i.e., no difference for humility, authenticity, courage, forgiveness, or stewardship). However, there was a significant difference in the two remaining factors: (a) empowerment (RQ4a) and (b) accountability (RQ4b). First, the Levene's test for empowerment (RQ4a) indicated that $p = 0.67 > 0.05$; therefore, the null hypothesis of equal variances in the two groups cannot be rejected (i.e., equal variances assumed), so $t(302) = -2.78, p = 0.01 < 0.05$. Second, the Levene's test for accountability (RQ4b) indicated that $p = 0.06 > 0.05$; therefore, the null hypothesis of equal variances in the two groups cannot be rejected (i.e., equal variances are assumed), so $t(302) = -2.75, p = 0.01 < 0.05$.

Table 4

Independent Samples t-Test for Empowerment and Accountability Factor Averages Grouped on Cadets with Rank

Scale	t-test for Equality of Means		
	<i>t</i>	df	<i>p</i>
Empowerment	-2.78	302	.01
Accountability	-2.75	302	.01

Commissioning. There was no difference in six of the seven factors by commissioning status; therefore, the response to RQ5a, RQ5b, and RQ5e through RQ5h is negative (i.e., no difference for empowerment, accountability, authenticity, courage, forgiveness, or stewardship). However, there was a significant difference in RQ5d (humility). As displayed in Table 5, the Levene's test for humility (RQ5d) indicated that $p = .73 > 0.05$; therefore, the null hypothesis of equal variances in the two groups cannot be rejected (i.e., equal variances assumed), so $t(302) = -2.65, p = 0.01 < 0.05$.

Table 5

Independent Samples t-Test for Humility Factor Average Grouped on Commissioning Status

Scale	t-test for Equality of Means		
	<i>t</i>	df	<i>p</i>
Humility	-2.65	302	.01

Cadet Class. There was no difference in four of the seven factors by commissioning status; therefore, the response to RQ6d and RQ6f through RQ6h is negative (i.e., no

difference for humility, courage, forgiveness, or stewardship). However, there was a significant difference in the three remaining factors: (a) empowerment (RQ6a), (b) accountability (RQ6b), and (b) authenticity (RQ6e). First, there was a significant difference for empowerment (RQ6a): $F(3, 303) = 3.68, p = 0.01 < 0.05$. Second, there was a significant difference for accountability (RQ4e): $F(3, 303) = 5.71, p = 0.00 < 0.05$. Finally, there was a significant difference for authenticity (RQ6e): $F(3, 303) = 2.90, p = 0.04 < 0.05$.

Table 6

ANOVA Results for Empowerment, Accountability, and Authenticity Factor Averages Grouped by Cadet Class

Scale		df	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Empowerment	Between Groups	3	3.68	.01
	Within Groups	303		
Accountability	Between Groups	3	5.71	.00
	Within Groups	303		
Authenticity	Between Groups	3	2.90	.04
	Within Groups	303		

Discussion

The results provide insight into the capability of the SLS instrument adapted for self-assessment to accurately measure the eight servant leadership factors initially described by Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011). They also provide an indication of the differences in self-perceived leadership characteristics by cadets at The Citadel based on six demographic factors.

Factor Analysis

The initial step in determining the accuracy of the adapted SLS was to conduct factor analysis on the 30 items in the SLS adapted for self-assessment and then compare the outcome to the results from developmental study 3 in Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) to verify compatibility and reliability.

First, the rotated component loading (Table 2, column 4) indicated that the 30 items in the adapted SLS successfully loaded on seven factors, which failed to meet the a-priori criterion of eight factors expected and depicted in the original SLS published by Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011). Second, Table 2, column 5 depicts total variance, which indicated that these seven factors had an eigenvalue > 1 , which confirmed that the a-priori criterion of eight factors was not met. The scree plot depicted in Figure 2 also graphically highlights these seven factors. Third, as depicted in Table 2, column 6,

six of the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the seven adapted SLS factors met the generally accepted minimum of .70; however, forgiveness (.55) fell short.

Finally, as depicted in Tables 7 and 8, the factors did not align well with the results in developmental study 3 by Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011), and the standing back factor disappeared entirely in the adapted SLS. Only 19 items (63%) in the adapted SLS aligned with the original version. The only factors to align completely in both instruments were courage (items 8, 16) and forgiveness (items 7, 15, 23). Furthermore, while the courage factor in the adapted SLS aligned directly with the original version and indicated acceptable reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .71), the operationalization of this construct with only two items would be weak. Therefore, this presents an area for future research to clarify and calibrate this measurement.

Table 7

Factor Comparison Between Original and Adapted SLS Instruments

Original SLS Items	Adapted SLS Items
Empowerment	
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
	6
12	
20	
27	
Standing Back	
5	
13	
21	
Accountability	
6	
	12
	13
14	14
	20

Original SLS Items	Adapted SLS Items
	21
22	22
Forgiveness	
7	7
15	15
23	23
Courage	
8	8
16	16
Authenticity	
9	9
17	17
24	
28	28
	29
Humility	
10	10
18	18
	19
25	
29	
30	30
Stewardship	
11	11
19	
	24
	25
26	26
	27

Note: Misaligned factors in the adapted SLS are in boldface.

^aStanding Back factor disappeared. ^bItem-5 did not load on a verified factor in the adapted SLS.

Table 8

Comparison of Reliability Statistics Between Original and Adapted SLS Instruments

Scale	Original SLS		Adapted SLS	
	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Empowerment	7	.89	5	.91
Standing Back ^a	3	.76	--	--
Accountability	3	.81	6	.80
Forgiveness	3	.72	3	.55
Courage	2	.69	2	.71
Authenticity	4	.82	4	.70
Humility	5	.91	4	.79
Stewardship	3	.74	5	.82

Note: Factors that did not meet generally accepted minimum value of .70 in boldface.

^a*Standing Back factor disappeared in the adapted SLS.*

Research Questions

The data also indicated that four of the demographic factors (i.e., ethnicity, cadet rank, commissioning status, and cadet class) had a significant impact on some of the servant leadership factors. There was a significant difference in humility based on ethnicity (RQ2d) and commissioning status (RQ5d). There was also a significant difference in empowerment (RQ5a) and accountability (RQ5b) based on cadet rank. Finally, significant differences emerged in cadet class for empowerment (RQ6a), accountability (RQ6b), and authenticity (RQ6e).

Cadets at The Citadel may earn rank during their sophomore through senior years. Freshmen do not hold rank. Based on the data, cadets with rank had a significantly higher self-perception of empowerment and accountability. These results suggest that holding cadet rank serves to develop and bolster the self-perception of these two essential leadership characteristics. For example, question 6 in the adapted SLS, one of the items in the accountability factor states, "I hold subordinates responsible for the work they carry out." There was a significant difference between those who hold cadet rank (all upper class) and those who do not, which includes all the freshmen. In other words, the data suggest that cadets who hold rank have developed a stronger self-perception of their capability to hold a follower accountable for assigned work, which implies that the leader development model at the college works.

Likewise, there was a significant difference in three factors based on cadet class: (a) empowerment (RQ6a), (b) accountability (RQ6b), and (c) authenticity (RQ6e). Based on the data, cadet self-perception of empowerment, accountability, and authenticity varies year to year but increases significantly after freshman year. As with cadet rank, these results suggest that the four-year development model at the college enhances the self-perceived capability for these three key leadership characteristics.

Since there does not appear to be consensus on the reliability and validity of self-assessment methods in general (Kruger & Dunning, 1999; Mistar, 2011; Ross, 2006), these results would be most beneficial when combined with measurements from other perspectives of a leader to provide an accurate depiction of leadership capability and leader development progress. The original instrument published by Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) provides a leadership assessment from the follower perspective. The two remaining perspectives required to complete a holistic (i.e., 360-degree) leadership assessment would be a peer-level assessment and an assessment by a superior or supervisor. Beyond the required refinement to the self-assessment instrument to eventually confirm its capability, these two remaining perspectives offer areas for future research and development. Finally, at the beginning of this study, a college official at The Citadel suggested limiting the survey the three upper classes, omitting the freshmen (fourth class) entirely due to their inexperience in the leader development program and lack of any formal leadership roles at the college. This proposed modification to the sample presents a potential direction for future research.

Conclusion

Standardized assessment is an essential facet of the leader developmental process that has been missing at The Citadel. Although the results of this study did not align with the original research, the insights they provide will help to validate a self-assessment measurement eventually. Ultimately, such an instrument would provide vital feedback to adjust the developmental program, making it more effective and offering individual-specific information to facilitate counseling and personal leadership development for every student in the program. Validating a self-assessment version of the SLS could provide a missing measurement capability that would enhance the leader developmental capability at the college.

About the Author

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Appendix

Table A1

Original Servant Leadership Survey (SLS) Collection Instrument (As Published)

#	Question
Empowerment	
1	My manager gives me the information I need to do my work well.
2	My manager encourages me to use my talents.
3	My manager helps me to further develop myself.
4	My manager encourages his/her staff to come up with new ideas.
12	My manager gives me the authority to take decisions which make work easier for me.
20	My manager enables me to solve problems myself instead of just telling me what to do.
27	My manager offers me abundant opportunities to learn new skills.
Standing Back	
5	My manager keeps himself/herself in the background and gives credits to others.
13	My manager is not chasing recognition or rewards for the things he/she does for others.
21	My manager appears to enjoy his/her colleagues' success more than his/her own.
Accountability	
6	My manager holds me responsible for the work I carry out.
14	I am held accountable for my performance by my manager.
22	My manager holds me and my colleagues responsible for the way we handle a job.
Forgiveness	
7	My manager keeps criticizing people for the mistakes they have made in their work. (r)
15	My manager maintains a hard attitude towards people who have offended him/her at work. (r)
23	My manager finds it difficult to forget things that went wrong in the past. (r)
Courage	
8	My manager takes risks even when he/she is not certain of the support from his/her own manager.
16	My manager takes risks and does what needs to be done in his/her view.
Authenticity	
9	My manager is open about his/her limitations and weaknesses.
17	My manager is often touched by the things he/she sees happening around him/her.
24	My manager is prepared to express his/her feelings even if this might have undesirable consequences.
28	My manager shows his/her true feelings to his/her staff.
Humility	
10	My manager learns from criticism.
18	My manager tries to learn from the criticism he/she gets from his/her superior.
25	My manager admits his/her mistakes to his/her superior.
29	My manager learns from the different views and opinions of others.
30	If people express criticism, my manager tries to learn from it.
Stewardship	
11	My manager emphasizes the importance of focusing on the good of the whole.

#	Question
19	My manager has a long-term vision.
26	My manager emphasizes the societal responsibility of our work.

Note: © 2010 by Van Dierendonck and Nuijten. Item numbers in the table refer to the item's place in the survey. Items 7, 15, and 23 are reverse scored.

Table A2

Servant Leadership Survey (SLS) Collection Instrument Adapted for Self-assessment

#	Question
Empowerment	
1	I give subordinates the information they need to do their duties well.
2	I encourage subordinates to use their talents.
3	I help subordinates to further develop themselves.
4	I encourage my subordinates to come up with new ideas.
12	I give subordinates the authority to make decisions which makes completing their duties easier.
20	I enable subordinates to solve problems themselves instead of just telling them what to do.
27	I offer subordinates abundant opportunities to learn new skills.
Standing Back	
5	I keep myself in the background and give credit to others.
13	I am not chasing recognition or rewards for the things I do for others.
21	I enjoy my colleagues' success more than my own.
Accountability	
6	I hold subordinates responsible for the work they carry out.
14	Subordinates are held accountable for their performance by me.
22	I hold subordinates responsible for the way they handle their duties.
Forgiveness	
7	I keep criticizing people for the mistakes they have made in their duties. (r)
15	I maintain a hard attitude towards people who have offended me. (r)
23	I find it difficult to forget things that went wrong in the past. (r)
Courage	
8	I take risks even when I am not certain of the support from my own superior.
16	I take risks and do what needs to be done in my view.
Authenticity	
9	I am open about my limitations and weaknesses.
17	I am often touched by the things I see happening around me.
24	I am prepared to express my feelings even if this might have undesirable consequences.
28	I show my true feelings.
Humility	
10	I learn from criticism.
18	I try to learn from the criticism I get from my superior.
25	I admit my mistakes to my superior.

#	Question
29	I learn from the different views and opinions of others.
30	If people express criticism, I try to learn from it.
Stewardship	
11	I emphasize the importance of focusing on the good of the whole.
19	I have a long-term vision.
26	I emphasize the societal responsibility of our duties.

Note: This instrument has been adapted for self-assessment with the permission of Dr. Dirk Van Dierendonck. Item numbers in the table refer to the item's place in the survey. Items 7, 15, and 23 are reverse scored.